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A COMPANION TO THE
**FLAVIAN AGE OF
IMPERIAL ROME**

EDITED BY
ANDREW ZISSOS



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The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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Notes on Contributors

Antony Augoustakis is Professor of Classics at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of several books, including *Statius, Thebaid 8* (Oxford 2016) and *Motherhood and the Other: Fashioning Female Power in Flavian Epic* (Oxford 2010), and editor of several volumes, including *Oxford Readings in Flavian Epic* (Oxford 2016), *Flavian Poetry and its Greek Past* (Leiden 2014), *Ritual and Religion in Flavian Epic* (Oxford 2013), and *Brill's Companion to Silius Italicus* (Leiden 2010). He is currently working on a monograph on *Death and Ritual in Flavian Epic*, a commentary on Silius Italicus' *Punica* 3, and a commentary on Pseudo-Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus*.

Neil W. Bernstein is Professor in the Department of Classics and World Religions, Ohio University (Athens, Ohio). He is the author of *Ethics, Identity, and Community in Later Roman Declamation* (Oxford 2013) and *In the Image of the Ancestors: Narratives of Kinship in Flavian Epic* (Toronto 2008). His current project is a commentary on Book 2 of Silius Italicus' *Punica*.

Sarah H. Blake is Associate Professor of Roman Literature and Culture in the Department of Humanities at York University in Toronto, Canada. She has

published articles on representations of the material world in the literature of the Flavian period, and is currently completing a book-length study on material and visual culture in the corpus of the poet Martial.

Mark A. Brighton is Professor of Biblical Languages and Literature at Concordia University in Irvine, California. His areas of interest and research include the writings of Josephus, late Second Temple Judaism, and the New Testament literature. He is the author of *The Sicarii in Josephus's Judean War: Rhetorical Analysis and Historical Observations* (Atlanta 2009).

Christopher J. Dart is a Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. He has published on a diverse range of subjects including Roman citizenship, land rights, Roman concepts of project management, the Roman navy, and military history, and most recently has written a monograph on the Social War.

Loránd Dészpa teaches ancient history at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. He is the author of a monograph on the god Silvanus as well as of papers on various aspects of the emergence and stabilization of the monarchical order in early imperial Rome. He is currently working

on a monograph entitled *Imperium: The Princes and the New World Order (1st–3rd centuries CE)*.

Michael Dewar is Professor of Classics at the University of Toronto. He is the author of *Statius. Thebaid IX. Edited with An English Translation and Commentary* (Oxford 1991) and of *Claudian. Panegyricus De Sexto Consulatu Honorii Augusti. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Literary Commentary* (Oxford 1996). He has also published numerous articles and book-chapters on Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Statius, Claudian, Sidonius Apollinaris, Venantius Fortunatus, and Corippus.

William J. Dominik is Emeritus Professor of Classics at the University of Otago, New Zealand, has published extensively on Roman literature and rhetoric, especially of the Flavian era, the classical tradition, and lexicography. He is the co-editor of the Wiley-Blackwell *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (Oxford 2007, 2010) and a contributor to the following Wiley-Blackwell volumes: *A Companion to Ancient Epic* (Oxford 2005), *A Companion to the Classical Tradition* (2007), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (Oxford 2013), *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (Oxford 2013), and *The Encyclopedia of Greek Tragedy* (Oxford 2014).

Alessandro Galimberti is Assistant Professor of Roman History at the Department of Historical Sciences of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. His interests include the history and historiography of the first two centuries AD and the relations between Rome and the Jewish world. He is author of several scholarly articles on Roman history and historiography, as well as *I Giulio-Claudi in Flavio Giuseppe (AI XVIII–XX)*.

Introduzione, traduzione e commento (Alessandria 2001), *Adriano e l'ideologia del principato* (Rome 2007).

Andrew B. Gallia is Associate Professor of History at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. He is the author of *Remembering the Roman Republic: Culture, Politics and History under the Principate* (Cambridge 2011) and was a contributor to (and served as the principal cartographer for) *Mapping Augustan Rome*, edited by L. Haselberger (Portsmouth, RI 2002).

Gil Gambash is a Roman historian at the Department of Maritime Civilizations, The University of Haifa. He is currently looking at various aspects of Roman imperialism, particularly insofar as it concerns control over the provinces and the expansion of hegemony beyond provincial borders.

Frédéric Hurlet is Professor of Roman History at the Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense, as well as director of the Maison Archéologie & Ethnologie, René-Ginouvès. He has written several books and numerous articles on the transition from the Roman Republic to the Principate (first century BCE – first century CE). His research focuses in particular on the powers of the princes, imperial dynasties, and the government of the empire.

Adam Kemezis is Associate Professor of Classics at the University of Alberta. He is the author of *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire under the Severans: Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian* (Cambridge 2014) as well as several articles on Roman historiography and imperial Greek literature.

Alessandro Launaro is a Lecturer in Classical Archaeology at the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. His research interests include

the archaeology and history of Roman Italy, landscape archaeology, Roman urbanism, economy, and demography. He is the author of *Peasants and Slaves: the Rural Population of Roman Italy* (Cambridge 2011).

Eleanor Winsor Leach is Ruth Norman Halls Professor of Classical Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington. Her publications include both Latin Literature and Roman Art, particularly painting. Her two books in this latter field are *Rhetoric of Space: Literary and Visual Representations on Landscape in the Roman Republic and Augustan Periods* (Princeton 1988) and *The Social Life of Painting in Ancient Rome and on the Bay of Naples* (Cambridge 2004, 2011).

Helen Lovatt is Associate Professor in Classics at the University of Nottingham. She is the author of *Statius and Epic Games* (Cambridge 2005) and *The Epic Gaze: Vision, Gender and Narrative in Ancient Epic* (Cambridge 2013), and is currently working on an exploration of the Argonautic myth.

Charles Leslie Murison has been a member of the Department of Classical Studies, University of Western Ontario (where he is now Professor Emeritus), since 1963. His main publications are in the fields of Greek History of the fourth and third centuries BCE and Roman History of the first and second centuries CE. In addition to commentaries on Cassius Dio and Suetonius, he is author of *Galba, Otho and Vitellius: Careers and Controversies* (Hildesheim 1993).

John Nicols is Professor Emeritus in History at the University of Oregon, and had also held regular appointments at the Universität Freiburg and Stanford University. He has devoted much of his scholarly career to understanding how asymmetrical social relations serve to unify

society and is especially interested in the practice of patronage and clientele in the Roman Empire. Current and forthcoming publications include *The Practice of Hospitium on the Roman Frontier*, *Civic Patronage in the Roman Empire*, *The Crisis of the 3rd Century*, *Civic Ritual and Civic Patronage*, and *Ours and Theirs on the Roman Frontier*.

Grant Parker teaches at Stanford University and is Professor Extraordinaire at Stellenbosch University in his native South Africa. His publications on the exotic elements of Roman culture include *The Making of Roman India* (Cambridge 2008). His current research focuses on Roman travel and on the classical tradition in South Africa.

Randall Pogorzelski is an Assistant Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Western Ontario. His research focuses on Roman literature, especially Augustan and imperial poetry, as well as modern receptions of classical texts. He is the author of articles on Virgil, Lucan, and James Joyce.

Paul Roche is Senior Lecturer in Latin at the University of Sydney. He edited *Lucan, De Bello Civili I* (Oxford 2009); co-edited *Writing Politics in Imperial Rome* (Leiden 2009); and edited *Pliny's Praise: The Panegyricus in the Roman World* (Cambridge 2011). He is currently writing a commentary on Lucan, *De Bello Civili VII*.

Yun Lee Too is a literary and cultural historian, who has published extensively in Greek literature. Her most recent book is *The Idea of the Library in the Ancient World* (Oxford 2010). She resides in England.

Steven L. Tuck is Professor in Classics and the History of Art at Miami University. His scholarship includes articles on Roman sculpture, art and spectacle, notably the

Flavian sculptures of the Sacellum of the Augustales at Misenum, and triumphal imagery. He is also the author of Wiley-Blackwell's *A History of Roman Art* (Oxford 2015).

Laura K. Van Abbema received her PhD in ancient history from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2008. She has since been a visiting assistant professor at both Cornell and Brown universities, and she currently teaches at Southern Illinois University. Her work covers both social history and gender discourse on Roman women in the Flavian and early Antonine periods, and she has also published on Ammianus Marcellinus.

Frederik Juliaan Vervaeke is Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Melbourne. His publications concern the prosopography of the early imperial Senate, Roman public law and the political and socio-institutional history of the Roman world. His monograph *The*

High Command in the Roman Republic. The Principle of the summum imperium auspiciumque from 509 to 19 BCE (Stuttgart 2014) was published as Band 232 in the *Historia Einzelschriften* series.

Susan Wood is Professor of Art History at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. She holds a PhD from Columbia University in Art History and Archaeology, and has published a number of articles on Roman sculpture and related topics. She is the author of *Imperial Women: A Study in Public Images, 40 BC – AD 68*.

Andrew Zissos is Associate Professor of Classics at the University of California, Irvine. He is the author of numerous articles on Latin epic, along with a commentary on Book 1 of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* (Oxford 2008), and is co-editor, with Ingo Gildenhard, of *Transformative Change in Western Thought: a History of Metamorphosis from Homer to Hollywood* (Oxford 2013).

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Abbreviations

1 Terms and phrases

CE/BCE	Common Era/Before Common Era (a designation for the calendar year, equivalent to AD/BC). In this volume CE should be assumed when no indication is provided.
<i>cos.</i>	consul (often followed by the year of office; an intervening Roman numeral, if provided, indicates number of times to that point the individual has held the office).
<i>cos. ord.</i>	ordinary consul (often followed by the year of office; an intervening Roman numeral, if provided, indicates number of times to that point the individual has held the office).
<i>cos. suff.</i>	suffect consul (often followed by the year of office; an intervening Roman numeral, if provided, indicates number of times to that point the individual has held the office).
<i>ord.</i>	shortening of <i>cos. ord.</i> (q.v.).
r.	reigned (indicating the span of years over which the individual was emperor).
<i>s. c.</i>	<i>senatus consultum</i> .
<i>suff.</i>	shortening of <i>cos. suff.</i> (q.v.).

2 Ancient and medieval literature

Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus, <i>Res Gestae</i> .
Apollonius	Apollonius of Tyana
<i>Epist.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i> (<i>Epistles</i>)
Aug.	Augustus
<i>RG</i>	<i>Res Gestae</i>
Aul. Gell.	<i>see</i> “Gell.”
Aur. Vict.	Aurelius Victor
<i>De Caes.</i>	<i>De Caesaribus</i> (<i>On the Caesars</i>)
Auson.	Ausonius
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>Mosella</i>
Caes.	Caesar

<i>BGall.</i>	<i>Bellum Gallicum (Gallic Wars)</i>
Callim.	Callimachus
<i>Act.</i>	<i>Actia (Art of Poetry)</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epigrammata (Epigrams)</i>
Cass. Dio	Cassius Dio
Cat.	Catullus <i>Carmina (Poems)</i>
Cic.	Cicero
<i>de Prov. Cons.</i>	<i>De Provinciis Consularibus</i>
<i>Fam.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Familiares (Letters to his friends)</i>
<i>Inv.</i>	<i>De Inventione</i>
<i>Mur.</i>	<i>Pro Murena (In Defense of Murena)</i>
Dante	
<i>Parad.</i>	<i>Paradiso</i>
<i>Purgat.</i>	<i>Purgatorio</i>
Dio Chrys.	Dio Chrysostom
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orationes</i>
Dion. Hal.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus
<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Roman Antiquities</i>
Enn.	Ennius
<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annales (Annals)</i>
Epict.	Epictetus
<i>Disc.</i>	<i>Discourses</i>
Euseb.	Eusebius
<i>Hist. Eccl.</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica (Church History)</i>
Eutrop.	Eutropius, Abridgement of Roman History
Frontin.	Frontius
<i>Aq.</i>	<i>De Aquae Ductu Urbis Romae (On the Aqueducts of Rome)</i>
<i>Str.</i>	<i>Strategemata (Stratagems)</i>
Gai.	Gaius
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutiones (Institutes)</i>
Gell.	Aulus Gellius
NA	<i>Noctes Atticae</i>
Hom.	Homer
<i>Il.</i>	<i>Iliad</i>
Hor.	Horace
<i>Ars</i>	<i>Ars Poetica (Art of Poetry)</i>
<i>C.</i>	<i>Carmina (Odes)</i>
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Satirae (Satires)</i>
Joseph.	Josephus
<i>AJ</i>	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae (Jewish Antiquities)</i>
<i>Ap.</i>	<i>Contra Apionem (Against Apionem)</i>
<i>BJ</i>	<i>Bellum Judaicum (Jewish War)</i>
<i>Vit.</i>	<i>Vita (Life)</i>
Juv.	Juvenal
<i>Sat.</i>	<i>Saturae (Satires)</i>
Liv.	Livy, <i>Ab urbe condita</i>

Luc.	Lucan
<i>Bell. Civ.</i>	<i>Bellum Civile (Civil War)</i>
Lucian	
<i>Pereg.</i>	<i>De Morte Peregrini (On the Death of Peregrinus)</i>
Lucil.	Lucilius
Marcus	Marcus Aurelius
<i>Med.</i>	<i>Meditations</i>
Mart.	Martial
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epigrammata (Epigrams)</i>
<i>Spect.</i>	<i>Spectacula [or De Spectaculis / Liber Spectaculorum] (Spectacles)</i>
Ov.	Ovid
<i>Am.</i>	<i>Amores</i>
<i>Met.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
Pers.	Persius, <i>Saturae (Satires)</i>
Philostr.	Philostratus
VA	<i>Vita Apollonii</i>
VS	<i>Vita Sophistarum</i>
Plaut.	Plautus
<i>Mil.</i>	<i>Miles Gloriosus (Swaggering Soldier)</i>
Plin.	Pliny (the Elder)
NH	<i>Naturalis Historia (Natural History)</i>
Plin.	Pliny (the Younger)
<i>Epist.</i>	<i>Epistulae (Letters)</i>
<i>Pan.</i>	<i>Panegyricus</i>
Prop.	Propertius, <i>Elegiae (Elegies)</i>
Plut.	Plutarch
<i>Galb.</i>	<i>Life of Galba</i>
<i>Publ.</i>	<i>Publicola (Life of Publicola)</i>
Quint.	Quintilian
<i>Ep. Tryph.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Tryphonem (Letter to Trypho; introductory to Inst.)</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
Sen.	Seneca (the Elder)
<i>Controv.</i>	<i>Controversiae</i>
<i>Suas.</i>	<i>Suasoriae</i>
Sen.	Seneca (the Younger)
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogi (Dialogues)</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae (Letters)</i>
<i>Helv.</i>	<i>Ad Helviam (Consolation to Helvia)</i>
<i>QNat.</i>	<i>Quaestiones Naturales (Natural Questions)</i>
[Sen.]	Seneca (the Younger), misattributed
<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Octavia</i>
SHA	Scriptores Historiae Augustae
<i>Alex. Sev.</i>	<i>Alexander Severus</i>
<i>Aurel.</i>	<i>Aurelian</i>
<i>Claud.</i>	<i>Divus Claudius</i>
<i>Hadr.</i>	<i>Hadrian</i>

<i>Pert.</i>	<i>Life of Pertinax</i>
Sid.	Apoll. Sidonius Apollinaris <i>Carm. Carmina</i>
Sil.	Silius Italicus
<i>Pun.</i>	<i>Punica</i>
Stat.	Statius
<i>Ach.</i>	<i>Achilleid</i>
<i>Silv.</i>	<i>Silvae</i>
<i>Theb.</i>	<i>Thebaid</i>
Strab.	Strabo
Suet.	Suetonius
<i>Aug.</i>	<i>(Life of Augustus)</i>
<i>Calig.</i>	<i>(Life of Caligula)</i>
<i>Dom.</i>	<i>(Life of Domitian)</i>
<i>Gram.</i>	<i>De Grammaticis (On Grammarians)</i>
<i>Ner.</i>	<i>(Life of Nero)</i>
<i>Tit.</i>	<i>(Life of Titus)</i>
<i>Vesp.</i>	<i>(Life of Vespasian)</i>
<i>Vit.</i>	<i>(Life of Vitellius)</i>
Tac.	Tacitus
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>Agricola</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogus de Oratoribus (Dialogue on Oratory)</i>
<i>Ger.</i>	<i>Germania</i>
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i>
Val. Fl.	Valerius Flaccus
<i>Arg.</i>	<i>Argonautica</i>
Virg.	Virgil
<i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>
<i>Ecl.</i>	<i>Eclogues</i>
<i>G.</i>	<i>Georgics</i>
Vitr.	Vitruvius, <i>de Architectura</i>

3 Modern reference works

<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année Epigraphique</i> (Paris, 1888–).
<i>BMC (Greek)</i>	<i>A Catalog of the Greek Coins in the British Museum. 29 vols. (1873–1929).</i>
<i>BMCRE</i>	<i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum</i> (London, 1923–).
Bruns ⁷	<i>Fontes iuris romani antiqui</i> , edited by C. G. Bruns and O. Gradenwitz (Tubingen, 1909–1912 ⁷).
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Berlin, 1862–).
<i>DKP</i>	<i>Der Kleine Pauly</i> .
<i>FGH</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , edited by Felix Jacoby (Berlin and Leiden, 1923–58).

<i>FIRA</i>	<i>Fontes iuris romani anteiustiniani</i> , edited by S. Riccobono, (Florence, 1940–1943 ²).
González BJA	<i>Bronces jurídicos romanos de Andalucía</i> , edited by J. González (Seville, 1990).
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> , edited by W. Dittenberger <i>et al.</i> (Berlin, 1873–).
<i>IGRRP</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanae Pertinentes</i> , edited by R. Cagnat <i>et al.</i> (Paris, 1906–1927).
<i>IGLSyr</i>	<i>Inscriptions Grecques et latines de Syrie</i> (Paris, 1929–).
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , edited by H. Dessau (Berlin, 1892–1916).
<i>LSJ</i>	<i>A Greek–English Lexicon</i> , 9th edition, with Supplement, edited by H. J. Liddle and R. Scott, revised by H. S. Jones (Oxford, 1968).
<i>MW</i>	Michael McCrum and Arthur G. Woodhead, eds. <i>Select Documents of the Principates of the Flavian Emperors. Including the Year of Revolution. A.D. 68–96</i> (Cambridge, 1961) (See Concordance p. 273).
<i>OLD</i>	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> , edited by P. G. W. Glare (Oxford, 1968–82).
<i>RIB</i>	<i>Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , edited by R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright (Oxford, 1965–).
<i>RIC²</i>	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i> , vol. II, part I. AD 69–96: <i>Vespasian to Domitian</i> , 2nd edition, edited by I. Carradice and T. Buttrey (London, 2007).
<i>RPC</i>	<i>Roman Provincial Coinage</i> , vol. II. <i>From Vespasian to Domitian</i> , edited by A. Burnett, M. Amandry and I. Carradice (London, 1999); with a <i>Supplement</i> , edited by A. Burnett, M. Amandry, I. Carradice and P. P. Ripollès (London, 2006).
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> (Leiden, 1923–1971; Amsterdam, 1979–).
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Leipzig, 1900–).

4 Scholarly journals

<i>AC</i>	<i>L'Antiquité Classique</i>
<i>AHB</i>	<i>Ancient History Bulletin</i>
<i>A&A</i>	<i>Antike und Abendland</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archeology</i>
<i>AJAH</i>	<i>American Journal of Ancient History</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>AncSoc</i>	<i>Ancient Society</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>AntJ</i>	<i>Antiquaries Journal</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>BullComm</i>	<i>Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma</i>
<i>CISA</i>	<i>Contributi dell'Istituto di Storia Antica</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>

<i>ClAnt</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CR</i>	<i>Classical Review</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CW</i>	<i>Classical World</i>
<i>EMC</i>	<i>Echos du Monde Classique</i>
<i>G&R</i>	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
<i>HSCP</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>IJCT</i>	<i>International Journal of the Classical Tradition</i>
<i>JdI</i>	<i>Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archeology</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>LCM</i>	<i>Liverpool Classical Monthly</i>
<i>MAAR</i>	<i>Memoirs of the American Academy at Rome</i>
<i>MD</i>	<i>Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici</i>
<i>MH</i>	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
<i>Mnem.</i>	<i>Mnemosyne</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>Numismatic Chronicle</i>
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
<i>PCPhS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des Études Anciennes</i>
<i>REL</i>	<i>Revue des Études Latines</i>
<i>RbM</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
<i>RIL</i>	<i>Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo</i>
<i>RomMitt</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Rom</i>
<i>RSCI</i>	<i>Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>



Map 0.1 The Roman empire at the dawn of the Flavian Age, circa 69 CE, indicating provinces (in full capitals) and important peoples bordering the empire

Introduction

Andrew Zissos

The story I now begin is rich in vicissitudes, grim with warfare, torn by civil strife, a tale of horror even during times of peace. It tells of four emperors slain by the sword, three civil wars, an even larger number of foreign wars and some that were both at once: successes in the East, disaster in the West ... And Italy too was smitten with new disasters, or disasters it had not witnessed for a long period of years. Towns along the rich coast of Campania were swallowed up or buried. Rome was devastated by fires, ancient temples were destroyed, and the Capitol itself was torched by Roman hands. Sacred rites were shockingly profaned, and there were scandals in high places. The sea swarmed with exiles and the island cliffs were red with blood. Worse horrors reigned in the city.

Tac. *Hist.* 1.2

Thus does the Roman historian Tacitus begin his account of the turbulent period ushered in by the fall of Nero, the last of the Julio-Claudian emperors. There followed the chaotic “Year of Four Emperors” (69 CE), from which the seasoned general Vespasian, a far from illustrious figure, emerged to found Rome’s second imperial dynasty, the Flavian dynasty, and stabilize and restore the Roman state. The nearly three decades that saw the rule of, first, Vespasian, and then his two sons Titus and Domitian was a crucial period in Rome’s political and cultural evolution. Despite lasting just 27 years (69–96 CE), the Flavian dynasty achieved a great deal. It managed to suppress unrest in the empire (the Judean and Batavian revolts), consolidate in a “rational” manner the frontiers on the Rhine and Danube, along with those in the East, improve the nature and operation of the imperial administration, place the empire’s finances on a firm footing, and carry out an ambitious public building program that transformed the landscape of Rome. The Flavian Age was also a crucial phase in the evolution of the Principate itself – in no small part because the Flavians were Rome’s *second* imperial dynasty, and because of the relative *ignobilitas* of Vespasian and his family.

For all the undeniable importance of the foregoing, it will probably come as no surprise that this Companion does not confine itself to the Flavian dynasty and its achievements. Study of the early Principate is no longer exclusively or even predominantly the study of its rulers – or its elite citizens. This volume, accordingly, attempts to examine the Flavian Age in a broader and more inclusive sense, taking into account its complex ethnic makeup, its multicultural character, its evolving economic and political structures, the shifting relationship between center and periphery, and the far-reaching religious developments of the time. The decision to undertake a more capacious examination is based on the conviction that readers will be best served by an approach that remains alert to the ways in which political, economic, social and cultural forces interacted to create different social worlds within a composite Roman empire.

There is of course a danger inherent in any attempt to capture some of this diversity: strategies of breadth inevitably risk a loss of depth. Here an attempt has been made to steer a middle course. So, for example, two provinces, Judea (CHAPTER 13) and Britain (CHAPTER 14), have been allotted dedicated chapters. The justification for this pair will be clear enough to readers, but strong arguments could have been made for like treatment of other regions – such as Germany and Spain, the latter undergoing rapid “Romanization,” and supplying many prominent figures of the Flavian Age (to say nothing of the future emperors Trajan and Hadrian, the former already making important strides under the Flavians). The sheer magnitude and complexity of the Roman empire in the later first century presents problems of coverage that necessitate difficult choices.

There is also a less obvious price to be paid for casting a wider net: a more comprehensive approach, one that moves beyond the Flavian dynasty itself, runs the risk of diluting the specifically “Flavian” component. So, for example, in discussing economic developments Alessandro Launaro (CHAPTER 10) observes that the imperial center (Italy) reaches something of a peak in the Flavian age, whence it begins an inexorable decline vis-à-vis the periphery (provinces) – but this is part of a larger historical narrative; Laura Van Abbema’s exploration of women in the Flavian Age (CHAPTER 16) does not identify much in the way of trends specific to the Flavian rather than early imperial period; and Adam Kemezis’ examination of Greek literature in the Flavian Age (CHAPTER 25) provides only modest, if compelling, suggestions of what marks some of that literature as “Flavian.” But such chapters are as essential to a composite picture of the Flavian Age as those that can more securely point to strongly marked or pervasive “Flavian” elements. Even when considering dynastic developments, broader patterns are often at work. So, for example, the Flavian Age is noteworthy for a hardening of the apparatus of the Principate, of its mechanisms of domination; but this could be seen as belonging to a more general trend: the early history of the Principate is characterized by progressive encroachments, incremental shifts in political and economic structures whereby an individual household was gradually transformed into the state government (see Millar 1977, 189–201).

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the pursuit of broad coverage often entails working against the grain of the available evidence. The Flavian Age has left a considerable body of data: literary, epigraphical, and archeological. It has even bequeathed entire cities and towns, Pompeii chief among them, captured in a moment by the eruption of Vesuvius and “frozen in time,” as it were. These sites offer precious insights into popular culture through quotidian artifacts, graffiti, and much more

besides. On the whole, though, it is overwhelmingly the views and experiences of the sociopolitical elite that have come down to us through the literary sources, our most important testimony. The privileged classes that administered and profited from the empire were the same people who shaped its literature. The Roman elite not only furnished many writers – the early imperial period might well be dubbed “the age of the senatorial author” – but also exercised control over what was written by the less privileged through literary patronage. Hence, as with other periods in Roman history, the available evidence is skewed: we are relatively well informed with respect to the experience and views of the imperial family and the aristocracy, but it is often difficult to reconstruct the experience of other groups. Representative balance would require considering the experience of non-Romans in a world dominated by Roman power, of women in a world ruled by men, and so on. But as this is often impossible, we must be alert to what is missing: the events, groups and cultural practices that our sources (and indeed traditional historiographical accounts) have omitted or overlooked, and which have often left scant traces.

1 The scheme of this volume

This volume is divided thematically into six sections, followed by a series of appendices and an extensive glossary of terms.

Part I (Preliminary) consists of a single essay in which Frédéric Hurlet (CHAPTER 1) surveys the most important evidence (literary, epigraphic, numismatic) for the period, focused on the question of imperial power. There is, to be sure, an impressive array of data, and yet Hurlet crucially reminds us of inherent limitations: the fragmentary nature of evidence means that there are many important questions that we cannot answer.

Part II (Dynasty) begins with a chronological sweep in four chapters, proceeding from the rise to the fall of the Flavian dynasty. Frederik Vervaeke (CHAPTER 2) examines the striking sequence of events that enabled Vespasian to use his military appointment in Judea and some strategic regional alliances to transform the Levant into the base of civil-war faction that placed him on the throne. The reigns of each of the Flavian emperors are then surveyed and assessed in turn, with John Nicols (CHAPTER 3) looking at Vespasian, Charles Murison (CHAPTER 4) at Titus, and Alessandro Galimberti (CHAPTER 5) at Domitian, whose assassination in 96 brought the dynasty to an end. The next three chapters explore the “image” projected by the Flavians. Steven Tuck (CHAPTER 6) considers Flavian image-making in general terms, identifying four major thematic clusters: victory and triumph; peace, restoration, and renewal; dynasty; public benefaction. Susan Wood (CHAPTER 7) looks specifically at the portraiture of the imperial family, both in sculpture and coinage. Andrew Gallia (CHAPTER 8) surveys the remarkable Flavian building program in Rome, which produced some of the city’s most iconic structures and monuments. Finally, Láránd Dészpa (CHAPTER 9) looks at the often-troubled relationship between the Flavian dynasty and the Roman senate, focusing on the reigns of Vespasian and Domitian.

Part III (Empire) considers the Roman empire and its management in the Flavian Age. Using current theoretical approaches to the study of the ancient economies, Alessandro Launaro (CHAPTER 10) considers the economic impact of Flavian rule

within the broader context of the economy of the early Roman Empire. Christopher Dart (CHAPTER 11) systematically surveys Flavian management of the empire's frontiers, including their "rational" approach to defensive lines and development of infrastructure, and considers whether this amounts to a paradigm shift in military policy, a new imperial "grand strategy," as was famously argued by Edward Luttwak. Randall Pogorzelski (CHAPTER 12) probes the question of center and periphery in the Flavian period. Starting from the observation that the person of the emperor is beginning to rival Rome itself as the imperial center, Pogorzelski proceeds to identify further confusions of the center-periphery conception, resulting in a bewildering multiplication of such conceptions, which he illustrates in various literary works. The last two chapters of Part III take an in-depth look at individual provinces, one in the east, the other in the west, that figure prominently in developments of the Flavian Age. Mark Brighton (CHAPTER 13) examines Flavian Judea, discussing both the Jewish rebellion and the dramatic consequences of its harsh suppression for Jewish life and culture. Gil Gambash (CHAPTER 14) considers developments in Britain, which was the object of Roman imperialist expansion in the Flavian period, particularly under the governorship of Agricola.

Part IV (Societies and Cultures) consists of chapters analyzing various aspects of Roman and non-Roman culture in the Flavian period. Grant Parker (CHAPTER 15) considers the concept of foreignness operative in the Flavian period, with an eye to illuminating the countervailing forces of othering and integration in Roman society, and the cosmopolis of Rome in particular. Using evidence drawn from honorary inscriptions and literary sources, Laura Van Abbema (CHAPTER 16) discusses how, as new claims to status were negotiated during the Principate, well-to-do women of the Flavian period were assuming important roles in social and political networks, particularly as patrons. Yun Lee Too (CHAPTER 17) draws on the writings of Quintilian, Plutarch, and Dio of Prusa to survey and contrast educational practices in elite Roman culture and that of the Greek East. The educational treatises of Plutarch and Dio suggest that Greek culture retained considerable autonomy, and was tenacious in its self-conscious transmission and perpetuation. With an imaginative flourish Eleanor Leach (CHAPTER 18) surveys various structures and domiciles in Flavian Pompeii, achieving an ingenious sifting out of contemporary Flavian (or near-Flavian) elements by focusing on rebuilding activity that followed the earthquake (or series of earthquakes) in the latter part of Nero's reign. Sarah Blake (CHAPTER 19) identifies and discusses a Flavian-era aesthetic, evident in wall painting and literature, that valued everyday objects, depicting them aesthetically, and thereby conveying social messages about qualities valued in the Flavian period. Helen Lovatt (CHAPTER 20) explores spectacle in Flavian culture, including gladiatorial combat and the triumph; she considers how literary accounts, while emphasizing glory and victory, sometimes reveal an awareness of, and sensitivity to, suffering and defeat. Antonios Augoustakis (CHAPTER 21) surveys literary culture in the Flavian period, noting the crucial role played by imperial and aristocratic patronage, while discussing the practices of recitation, publication, and dissemination of individual works, as well as issues of authorship and plagiarism that were coming more sharply into focus in the Flavian Age.

Part V (Literature) discusses the rich literary output of the Flavian Age, both Latin and Greek, with the latter treated in a single chapter and the former treated in three,

divided along generic lines. Because the major Latin authors and their works are cited and discussed throughout the volume, contributors for these chapters were invited to undertake targeted analyses rather than offering general overviews. In the first of these, Neil Bernstein (CHAPTER 22) undertakes a historicizing analysis of the epic poetry of Valerius Flaccus, Statius and Silius Italicus, considering their works as reflections or commentaries on contemporary developments in the political, social, and religious spheres. William Dominik (CHAPTER 23) performs a rather similar operation for Statius' *Silvae* and Martial's *Epigrams*, examining these poetic collections for the information they yield on contemporary social life and values. Turning to Latin prose literature, Paul Roche (CHAPTER 24) examines the dedicatory prefaces of the two monumental Latin prose works that have survived from the Flavian period, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (*Naturalis Historia*) and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*: the former affirms the author's connections to the Flavian court, whereas the latter emphasizes the author's professional competence and personal authority. In surveying Greek authors of the Flavian period, Adam Kemezis (CHAPTER 25) considers the extent to which one can identify a "Flavian Greek Literature," defined as Greek texts responding to Roman dynastic events. Finally, Michael Dewar (CHAPTER 26) provides a survey of Flavian literature that is attested in the sources but has *not* survived – an exercise that helps to situate in a broader context the texts we do have, while providing a salutary reminder that these extant works represent a tiny fraction of the aggregate literary output of the age.

Part VI (Reception) consists of three interrelated essays by Andrew Zissos exploring how subsequent ages and cultures have looked back upon, imagined, understood and interpreted the Flavian Age. The first (CHAPTER 27) considers some of the ways in which the Flavian dynasty, its actions and its monuments have resonated in subsequent eras; the second (CHAPTER 28) looks at the profound impact made on the modern imagination by the rediscovery of Pompeii; the third (CHAPTER 29) surveys the influence of some of the major Flavian writers upon later literature and culture.

Four appendices have been provided to assist the reader in grappling with the complexities of the historical, political, and cultural subject matter. Appendix 1 (Chronology) provides a detailed timeline of major events in the political, military, and cultural spheres. Appendix 2 (Demographic and Other Estimates) supplies a series of "best guesses" on questions of population, longevity, and so on for the Flavian period. Appendix 3 consists of tables indicating legionary dispositions at different points in the Flavian Age. Appendix 4 provides the full text (in the original Latin and English translation) of the *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani*, along with brief explanatory notes. Last, but by no means least, the volume is equipped with an extensive *Glossary* explaining the various political, military, and cultural terms used in the preceding chapters.

2 The perils of periodization

The decision to undertake a Companion to the Flavian Age prompts a fundamental question: does it make sense, and is it conceptually useful, to speak of a Flavian Age? This volume assumes an affirmative answer, and in proceeding on this assumption it commits itself to an act of periodization. Periodization is the division of time into

designated blocks – that is, into named “periods” or “ages.” There has been, and continues to be, an energetic postmodernist critique of periodization, for which Michel Foucault remains the standard-bearer. Such critics have pointed out that time and history are continuous, so that periodization is at its core a more or less arbitrary act that makes something discrete out of this continuity. Any “period” or “age,” as an analytical category, can serve only imperfectly as a means of structuring political, cultural, or literary history. Be that as it may, the “period” remains a disciplinary necessity, an indispensable conceptual tool for organizing analysis of political and cultural history. It needs to be acknowledged, though, that the choice of a chronological block has an intrinsic distorting effect: it will ineluctably influence the discussion and interpretation of events. The initial act of periodization is, therefore, something that merits careful consideration.

The conceptual value of an “age” will depend upon the extent to which the designated chronological block evinces consistent features. In the case of the Flavian Age, the consistency derives most obviously from the genealogical or dynastic facts. As with the Julio-Claudian period that preceded it, the *nomen gentile* speaks to the periodizing act. Likewise, it should be noted that the Flavian dynasty was succeeded by what ancient historians conventionally designate as a new age, the series of reigns from Nerva through Marcus Aurelius conventionally designated “the Five Good Emperors,” in which adoption was the mechanism of succession. The Flavian Age is thus delimited by two apparently well-defined imperial “ages” that afford it relief (to say nothing of the “caesura” created by the chaotic “Year of Four Emperors” from which the Flavians emerged).

Beyond the genealogical facts, one might seek to identify distinctive political, economic and social dynamics or, in the cultural sphere, sets of thematic and stylistic features characteristic of e.g. architecture, art, or literature. Where apparently distinctive “Flavian” elements exist, they need to be accounted for. Here we get into broader theoretical questions regarding the interrelation and interaction of the various elements and spheres of human society. These different components exert reciprocal influence on one another as part of a continuous and dynamic process that produces the specific “articulation” of a given society at a given time. Almost by its very nature and formulation, a Companion to the Flavian Age will be prone to privileging the political sphere (even though Marxist theory, for one, identifies this as part of the societal “superstructure” – and so less determinate and influential than elements of the “base”). A natural approach is to take as a point of departure the political fact of the Flavian dynasty, and seek to correlate this to, say, developments in the cultural sphere. Such an approach is not without potential pitfalls: even if we accept the notion of a meaningful political age, this need not produce corresponding articulations in other spheres. Here we see the logic of Adam Kemezis’ approach of locating the “Flavian” element of Greek literature in overt reactions to the dynasty (CHAPTER 25). But insisting on such an approach across the board would generate incoherence, and, perhaps worse, obscure the composite picture this volume endeavors to generate. So, in emphasizing a Mediterranean setting for Rome’s power in the Flavian period, Grant Parker (CHAPTER 15) points to an important principle that had held for centuries. Likewise, the “aesthetic of the everyday” reconstructed by Sarah Blake (CHAPTER 19) is a broad transcultural phenomenon, which, if it could be pinned down, would have at best a specific “Flavian”

articulation. The inclusive parameters under which this Companion was conceived make the question of distinctive “Flavian” features only one of various factors to be taken into account.

3 Flavian delineations

Vespasian was the first Roman emperor to establish a genuine hereditary dynasty: his son Titus was, as Charles Murison (CHAPTER 4) reminds us, the first emperor to succeed his biological father; after his short reign he was, in turn, succeeded by his younger brother Domitian. When the latter was assassinated in 96 CE, the hereditary dynasty came to an abrupt end, having lasted a mere 27 years.

One potential objection to accepting the validity of a “Flavian Age” arises from the short timespan involved. Henderson (2003, 247) speaks somewhat glibly of “a blip between the families of Augustus and Nerva.” This may be a playful restatement of Vagi’s (1999, 203) remark that the short-lived Flavian dynasty “served as a conduit between the decaying Julio-Claudians and the “adoptive” emperors of the second century.” Both characterizations seem to cast doubt on the value of devoting much critical attention to the category of the “Flavian” as such. And indeed, one might reasonably question to what degree a new age could define itself in the span of little more than a quarter of a century, given the conservatism inherent in the political and administrative mechanisms as well as the processes of cultural production in the early Principate. Here the early determination of the Flavian dynasty to distance itself from Nero, its immediate Julio-Claudian predecessor, to signal an overt break from the practices and priorities of his regime, has proven to be a crucial factor.

The Flavian “repudiation” of Nero, the decision to construct an ideological and cultural identity that looked elsewhere for its inspiration – to Augustus, to their own Italian municipal origins, even to aspects of Republican culture – proved decisive for defining the new era. Vespasian understood not only the need for restoring order, but for something deeper – a sense of moral renewal. “There was, as one element among many in the pressures of Roman politics, a strong demand by the ruled for virtue in their rulers, or at least restraint from vice” (Powell 2002, 118). A down-to-earth, almost rustic Flavian vigor was projected as displacing perceived Neronian decadence. Leddy (1953, 50) captures the cogency of this message in contrasting the “sturdy Roman qualities” of Vespasian with the “vicious weakness” of the Neronian court. And the imperative to maintain distance from Neronian precedent persisted over time, as both Titus and Domitian endeavored upon accession to avoid the obvious parallels: so the former adopted a more “sober” lifestyle upon becoming emperor, and the latter is said to have given up writing.

Unlike the Julio-Claudians, the Flavians came from the Italian gentry rather than the Roman aristocracy – a fact that Vespasian chose to advertise rather than downplay. Vespasian was (and presented himself as) a tough and experienced soldier who had reached the throne through personal ability, in contrast to his Julio-Claudian predecessors who relied upon ancestral glory rather than their own merit. The image conventionally assigned to the Flavians is that of a family grounded in its Italian roots, characterized by a “vigour plébéienne” (Salles 1994, 83). Vespasian “is widely understood to embody

some attractive features of Roman municipal culture: hardy, unpompous, and skeptical” (Curran 2007, 90). This view is reinforced by official portraits, which, as Susan Wood (Chapter 7, section 1) discusses, mark a return to a stark realism that harks back to the tradition of the Roman Republic.

It is perhaps not unreasonable to speak of a post-Neronian *habitus*: Vespasian was hardworking, practical, parsimonious – and he valued and encouraged these qualities in others. He set an example that no doubt influenced behavior, particularly that of the upper classes. There was less emphasis on *otium* (leisure), more on *labor*; indeed, work seems to have become an ethical value in itself. This is reflected in “upright” men of prominence like Pliny the Elder (himself a dutiful critic of the extravagances of the Julio-Claudian court). Pliny’s incessant activity, both scholarly and administrative, has made him, in the eyes of many scholars, an emblematic figure of the Flavian Age. His immense writing project, the encyclopedic *Natural History*, is said to have been composed mostly at night, in his very limited free time. One of Pliny’s best known apothegms comes from the prologue to his encyclopedia: *vita vigilia est* (“life is being awake,” *NH* pr. 18). As Paul Roche (CHAPTER 24) well observes, “Pliny’s industry is the very image of the hardworking Italian repeatedly promoted by the Flavian emperors.”

A more concrete reversal of Neronian priorities is evident in the Flavian building program, rightly considered one of the most distinctive cultural features of the age. As Steven Tuck (CHAPTER 6) and Andrew Gallia (CHAPTER 8) show, the program achieved a fresh monumental articulation by thematizing Flavian military success while simultaneously placing a premium on utilitarian principles. The latter represented a none too subtle repudiation of Nero’s focus on “private” edifices that garnered considerable popular support.

The Flavian Amphitheater (or “Colosseum”), begun under Vespasian and completed under his successors, was an emblematic project in this regard. This immense venue of popular consumption – also a breathtaking articulation of imperial power – was built on the site of Nero’s demolished Golden House. It had a more “highbrow” counterpart in the Temple of Peace, completed in the middle of Vespasian’s reign. This structure was not merely a monument celebrating the Flavian victory over the Jews; it was an act and gesture of imperial “sharing” with the people. In a discussion of celebrated works of art, Pliny the Elder praised Vespasian for putting on display in the Temple of Peace and other public buildings works of art that had been “looted” by Nero and “placed in the sitting rooms of his Golden House” (Plin. *NH* 34.84).

Flavian literature also manifests some distinctive “turns”. The period is witness to a striking profusion of poetry, including epic, epigram, and occasional poetry. This poetic production frequently reflects the cultural program established by the Flavian dynasty, or reacts in various ways to it. Even the major epics of the period, though taking as their themes either mythology or distant history, react to the contemporary Roman world, as Neil Bernstein (CHAPTER 22) shows. Broadly speaking, Flavian literature exhibits strong classicizing tendencies (sometimes dubbed “Flavian neo-classicism”), which critics have seen as a reaction against the more experimental modes of Neronian literature. In epic poetry, there is a striking reaffirmation of Virgil as the supreme and unassailable model, a noteworthy development after the bold generic experimentation of Ovid in the later Augustan period and the radical Neronian epicist Lucan. In prose, Quintilian affirmed Cicero as the ideal, rejecting

the stylistic innovations of intervening writers, Seneca above all. As Lana (1980, 56) well observes, Quintilian theorized classicism, with its well-defined rules and its unreachable models.

The cultural project of ordering knowledge (of imposing order upon knowledge), broadly characteristic of the imperial Roman period, is particularly in evidence in the Flavian Age, as emblemized by Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*. Pliny, who like Quintilian was working under the imperial aegis, defines his task as not so much the discovery of new facts as the sifting through earlier writers and settling their points of disagreement (*mibi si non inveniendi nova, at certe iudicandi de veteribus iniungere laborem*, *Inst.* 1. pr. 2). Likewise, as Yun Lee Too (CHAPTER 17) observes, "Quintilian regarded rhetoric as having already reached its full development, so that his task was not to invent new theories and techniques, but to evaluate and judiciously select from those already in existence." All this suggests that the Flavian period was, at least in some respects, a custodial age, dedicated more to the preservation and systematization than to the expansion of knowledge (Kennedy 1969, 137–8; Lana 1980, 14).

Another "turn" vis-à-vis Nero has to do with the prestige of Greek culture in the imperial milieu. The Flavian Age represents a noteworthy pause in the advance of Hellenism, in the wake of the vigorous Hellenizing tendencies of Nero (Lana 1980, 42). As Adam Kemezis observes (CHAPTER 25, section 2), Nero "tried to redefine the role of emperor in terms of his version of Hellenic excellence," whereas the Flavian emperors, though not hostile to Greek culture, largely confined themselves to promoting those aspects of it they saw as politically useful. Shortly after coming to power, Vespasian rescinded Nero's grants of freedom, tax breaks and other special statuses to Greek cities – a measure which did little to endear him to that part of the empire. This was, to be sure, driven in part by economic and political imperatives, but it is hard not to see as well a statement of realigned cultural priorities. The Flavian position is all the more noteworthy – and age-defining – in view of what was to come: barely two decades after the fall of the dynasty, the philhellene Hadrian, nicknamed "the little Greek," rose to the throne, and vigorously resumed many of Nero's Hellenizing tendencies. Speaking more broadly, a slow but inexorable eastward shift in the empire's cultural and geopolitical center of gravity was underway, and would culminate in the founding of a new imperial capital, Constantinople, in the Greek East in 324 CE. In many respects, the Flavian Age stands out for its momentary arresting of this trend, not only in the reversal of Neronian policies and practices, but also, and despite the dynasty's ties to the East, its original power base, in manifesting a certain westward inclination – as seen, for example, in the imperial attention given to Britain and Spain.

At the same time, the relative prominence of Judea, and of Jews generally, in the Flavian Age remains a distinctive feature. The Judean revolt had made possible the rise of the Flavians (see CHAPTER 2, section 4), and the successful campaigns of Vespasian and Titus there provided an important underpinning for the dynasty's perceived legitimacy, while providing the focus of its early image-making (see CHAPTER 6, section 1 and CHAPTER 8, section 1). For most of the empire's Jews the war was devastating. It resulted not only in the death and enslavement of hundreds of thousands, but also the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple included, and the establishment of the *fiscus Iudaicus*, an annual tax levied on every Jew in the Roman empire (see CHAPTER 13, section 4). For some members of the elite, though, the situation was less bleak. Vespasian

and Titus' time campaigning in Judea produced important political and personal connections, and the engineering of the Flavian bid for power in the East generated important residual ties to that part of the empire. All this resulted in the prominence of a number of notables from the Near East in Flavian Rome. Chief among these were Agrippa II and his sister Berenice, who had from the outset aligned themselves with the Roman side. The already complex circumstances of this pair would become more complicated still, thanks to Berenice's love affair with Titus (see CHAPTER 15, section 5). Another noteworthy individual, much discussed in recent scholarship (Edmondson, Mason, and Rives 2005), is the Judean rebel leader Yosef ben Mattityahu, who, after defeat and capture was spared by Vespasian, and eventually freed and treated with generosity. He was made a Roman citizen, taking the name Titus Flavius Josephus, and became a figure of some prominence in Flavian Rome (Mason 2005). Josephus, who enjoyed the favor and financial support of all three Flavian emperors (Joseph. *Vit.* 428–9), went on to become a prolific writer – indeed, he is the most prolific extant author of the Flavian Age – and, as author of the *Bellum Judaicum* (*Jewish War*), an approved historian (*Vit.* 367).

4 Continuities versus discontinuities

As noted above, the conceptual usefulness of any “age” depends on the extent to which it evinces consistent features. In the early Empire, breaks in consistency were particularly prone to occur in the transition from one emperor to the next. Given that the Flavian Age saw three emperors in a mere 27 years, and that these three had very different personalities and faced very different circumstances upon accession, the question of continuities versus discontinuities inevitably arises.

To begin with the former, all three Flavian emperors were great builders, and many of their architectural projects spanned more than one reign. In the realm of religion, all three were committed to the state religion and its institutions; rather more strikingly, all three also supported the cult of Isis, the great rival of Christianity among the various diaspora cults of the early Empire. In political terms, all three were closely connected to the soldiery. The Flavian dynasty had, of course, arisen from the army and both Vespasian and Titus maintained the regime's military character; Domitian went even further in underscoring the importance of the legions and in emphasizing his own status as *imperator*. The importance of the army was often a latent state of affairs for the Julio-Claudian emperors – and Nero in particular – as they could rest on the prestige and mystique of their illustrious ancestry. But this was not the case for the Flavian *gens*; what gave Vespasian's bid for the throne plausibility were his military credentials, above all his success, and that of his son Titus, in the Jewish War. Perhaps inevitably, the Flavian emphasis on the military came at the expense of the senate. The so-called *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* (“law bestowing power on the emperor Vespasian”; for the text see APPENDIX 4) may or may not be a watershed document (see the discussions of Frédéric Hurlet in CHAPTER 1, section 2 and Loránd Dészpa in CHAPTER 9, section 2.2). But, regardless of how one assesses its novelty as a piece of legislation, its backdating of Vespasian's *dies imperii* to the day he was proclaimed by the army constitutes an important rupture in the civic ideology of the early Principate (Zissos 2003, 671). The point was a symbolic one: the hailing of the army was given precedence over the bestowal of authority by the senate,

which could only confirm retrospectively the choice of the soldiers. This initial marginalization of the senate set the pattern for the entire Flavian Age.

Further continuities are evident in the dynasty's choice of advisors, its court, and its patterns of political patronage. Regarding the latter, Tacitus famously tells us in the introduction to the *Histories* that his career was advanced by each of the Flavian emperors. Quintilian likewise: a Spaniard, he came to Rome in 68 (with Galba); early in Vespasian's reign he was awarded the chair of Latin rhetoric in Rome (which came with a generous annual salary of 100 000 *sestertii*); he taught for nearly two decades before retiring from teaching and pleading in 88, and then in 90 was appointed by Domitian tutor of his two grandnephews and heirs.

Continuities are likewise evident in the nature of the political opposition faced by the Flavians, and their reactions to it. Particularly noteworthy here are the marked philosophical associations of resistance: opponents of the dynasty used philosophical language to make their case and reinforced that language by associating themselves with philosophers; the Flavians responded with multiple expulsions of philosophers from Rome – first under Vespasian (71) and then under Domitian (perhaps 90 and 94). Against this backdrop, one of the features of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* that makes it a specifically "Flavian" work is its devaluation of philosophy. In this work, philosophy is cast as a subordinate discipline, best regarded as the servant of rhetoric. Scholars have partly attributed the unflattering treatment of philosophy and philosophers in the *Institutio Oratoria* to Quintilian's adherence to the ideological posture of the Flavian dynasty.

A number of important continuities, then, can be adduced for the Flavian Age. At the same time, it must be granted that significant discontinuities are in evidence as well. Perhaps the biggest strain on Flavian periodicity is presented by differences in the reign of Domitian vis-à-vis the first two Flavians. It would be difficult to deny that there is something of a political and cultural caesura between the second and third Flavian principates – a point that emerges with particular clarity in Loránd Dészpa's discussion of the relationship between the Flavians and the senate (CHAPTER 9).

The principate of Vespasian (69–79) has been characterized as a "success story" (Levick 1999, 1), a modern corroboration of the Tacitean dictum that Vespasian was the only emperor who improved *after* coming to power (Tac. *Hist.* 1.50; see also John Nicols' rich discussion in CHAPTER 3). Vespasian's elder son Titus' reign (79–81) was breathtakingly short and saw him coping with a series of natural disasters (Cass. Dio 66.24 tellingly reports that Titus was in Campania attending to the aftermath of Vesuvius' eruption when the great fire broke out in Rome) that left him with scant opportunity to institute major programmatic changes vis-à-vis his predecessor. On the whole Titus seems to have made a good showing in adversity and was remembered as "the darling and delight of the human race" (*amor ac deliciae generis humani*, Suet. *Tit.* 1). Titus' younger brother Domitian, the third and last Flavian emperor (81–96), fostered a more fearful political climate, was assassinated by a palace conspiracy and has suffered a more hostile press – starting with the imposition of *damnatio memoriae* immediately after his death. In recent years he has been less negatively assessed by a crop of modern scholars who have attempted at least a partial rehabilitation. But no matter how one evaluates the reign of Domitian, it is difficult to deny that it constituted a departure in various respects from those of his father and brother.

The reign of Domitian was marked by new departures in autocratic policy forming "an epoch in the growth of the Principate to absolute monarchy" (Bury 1900, 385).

This went hand in hand with a certain “sacralization” of imperial power: the report that Domitian insisted on being addressed *dominus et deus* (“master and god”), whether literally true or not, reflects this trend. Whereas Vespasian and Titus had been censors for a limited term, Domitian assumed the office for life. This, inter alia, afforded him the power to add and remove members of the senate, which he used to control and weaken that body. This had a profound and enduring impact, since his successors, though they did not take the title of censor, quietly retained the censorial powers. If, as already noted, all three Flavian emperors contributed to the marginalization of the senate, Domitian went further in intimidating and even terrorizing its members. He refused to recognize a decree, as Titus had before him, denying the emperor the right to condemn a senator to death. He cowed the senate through his resort to the use of *delatores* (informers), another noteworthy reversal of Titus’ policy. Domitian is repeatedly characterized in the sources as driven by suspicion and fear, which led to viciousness against perceived rivals of any kind. He was also clearly obsessed with restoring traditional morality undertaking the so-called *correctio morum* (“reform of morals”), a campaign that included revival and strict enforcement of Augustan moral legislation and the execution in the horrific traditional manner of the senior vestal virgin Cornelia for unchastity. All this points to significant departures from the spirit and practice of the reigns of Vespasian and Titus.

It has already been observed that, from its inception, the Flavian dynasty fashioned itself in sharp contradistinction to Nero. But that posture and its practical consequences seem to have waned as Domitian’s reign progressed. It is highly suggestive that, not long after his death, Domitian was styled by Juvenal as a “bald Nero” (*calvo ... Neroni, Sat. 4.38*). This characterization stuck (see CHAPTER 27, section 1.1), suggesting possible limits to using “anti-Neronian” comprehensively to define “Flavian.” Juvenal, of course, fully understood the devastating impact of linking any member of the Flavian dynasty to Nero. To some degree, the Flavians were victims of the success of their own anti-Neronian “propaganda” here. Suetonius tells us that there were widespread fears before Titus’ accession that he would prove to be “another Nero” (*aliū Neronem, Tit. 7*), though that, in the general view, did not come to pass. In the case of Domitian, however, the attribution was seen as having more validity; it is perhaps telling there were figures such as the *delator* M. Aquilius Regulus who committed the same kinds of offences under Domitian that he had under Nero (Plin. *Epist.* 1.5.1). The atmosphere of suspicion that reigned under Domitian was broadly characterized as recalling that in the years of Nero.

Affirmations of a parallelism between Nero and Domitian are often driven by a larger historical schema that saw the Flavian and Julio-Claudian dynasties as following parallel courses. In this dubious conception, Domitian corresponds to Nero within a dynastic progression that ends on a debased note with the violent death of a bad emperor after starting with a “good” one (Vespasian, Augustus). This was a popular conceit with contemporary and subsequent Roman writers (see Ramage 1989, 681), and it has found modern advocates as well. So, for example, Vagi (1999, 203), speaks of “a compressed version of the Julio-Claudians,” and Gowing (2005, 104) of “an odd and abbreviated iteration of the Julio-Claudian [dynasty].” Like many such conceptual schemas, this one has a significant distorting effect, inviting us to fit events under Domitian within a predetermined conceptual grid. Was Domitian so different, and so much worse, than the first two Flavian emperors? Recent scholarship has tended to narrow the gap, to at least partially rehabilitate him: Alessandro Galimberti (CHAPTER 5)

offers a balanced assessment, acknowledging the good along with the bad. Certainly the senatorial class had good reasons to resent Domitian. But as always, we must recognize that this group represents the tiniest fraction of the population over whom the emperor exercised power; the vast bulk of the empire's residents would have experienced essential continuity under Domitian.

Conclusion

Having reckoned with the conception of the Flavians as a Julio-Claudian “repeat in miniature,” it seems appropriate to return to Henderson's characterization of the Flavian Age as a “a blip between the families of Augustus and Nerva.” Here we might contrast the thoughtful assertion of Frederik Vervaeke (CHAPTER 2), following the analysis of Nicols (1978), that, in a certain sense, the Flavian regime does not end with Domitian. If one looks beyond the genealogical facts, the Flavians might be said to have set up an imperial regime that would retain power until 192 CE: they promoted to positions of power the families that would provide future emperors, most obviously Trajan's father and Trajan himself. Likewise it might be argued that the Flavians reorganized and systematized many aspects of imperial administration, including a more rigorous management of the state's financial resources, making the whole system more sustainable and enduring. By doing so, they laid the foundations for the developed imperial system; on such a view it would be the Julio-Claudian Age that was in fact a transitional stage between Republic and Empire. Such a view would perhaps validate the “Flavian” as a political category, but would also call into question the traditional, genealogically delimited periodization that is the organizing premise of this volume. Once again, we are reminded that an “age” is an intrinsically contingent category.

It might be useful to close with some ancillary observations on the Flavian Age as the point of origin for important trends that continued beyond the death of Domitian. The events leading to the rise of the Flavian dynasty yielded a number of significant revelations, foremost among them the “secret of empire” (*arcanum imperii*), in the celebrated Tacitean formulation, that emperors could be made elsewhere than at Rome (*Hist.* 1.4). But no less important was the revelation that emperors could be made from figures of comparatively humble origins: the revolutionary implications of this point should not be overlooked. Nero's immediate successor was Galba, a figure chosen in large part because the antique origins of his family could rival those of the Julio-Claudians. The Flavian dynasty represents a crucial broadening of the prerequisites of empire, a move away from the exclusivity of Roman aristocratic families. The elevation of Vespasian, an Italian of relatively modest origins, to the principate is an early manifestation of the leveling process that was gradually placing first Italy and then the other regions of the empire on something close to an equal footing with Rome. Shortly after the Flavians, the Roman empire would see its first emperors from the provinces. Another important revelation, well discussed by Rosso (2010, 186), is that the emperor could remain outside Rome: it is striking that several months passed between Vespasian's senatorial investiture (late 69 or early 70) and his return to Italian soil. Vespasian thereby made of Alexandria, his place of residence in this period, a fleeting imperial center, temporarily relegating Rome to “peripheral” status. Here we see an important element of the problematization of the

imperial center, as discussed by Randall Pogorzelski (CHAPTER 12). Now it was clear not only that the emperor constituted the heart of the empire, but that that heart was mobile. This truth stood yet more starkly revealed under Domitian, who was the first emperor since Tiberius to spend extended periods of time away from Rome. Unlike Tiberius, whose goal was a reclusive life on the island of Capri, Domitian took the political “center”, which is to say the imperial court, with him. Sometimes the court convened at his Alban villa; on numerous occasions it accompanied him to the fringes of empire as he campaigned in various far-flung theaters of war. This pattern anticipates the itinerant emperor Hadrian, who spent years at a time away from Rome, and who preferred to dwell in his villa at Tivoli when in Italy. Thus, as Jones (1992, 27) observes, first Vespasian and then more decisively Domitian showed that “the administration of the empire could be divorced not only from the senate, but also from the city itself.”

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PART I

Preliminary

CHAPTER 1

Sources and Evidence

Frédéric Hurlet

Introduction

As one of the “human sciences,” history entails both a method and an object of study. Any study or assessment of the Flavian Age and its emperors must begin with the question of the sources upon which our knowledge of this period rests, and a vetting of those sources according to category. This is an essential prerequisite for all historical research; a synoptic examination of sources also offers a unique occasion to circumscribe the field of investigation by identifying which questions it is possible to answer and, no less importantly, those that are less fruitfully raised because of want of adequate evidence.

The sources used by ancient historians are not immediately intelligible to the general reader today because of their highly technical nature: this begins with, but is by no means limited to, the fact that the languages involved are, principally, Latin and Greek. A conventional division is made between written sources and material sources. The former fall into three main categories: literary, epigraphic, and numismatic; the latter include iconographic and archaeological evidence. Space limitations necessitate a narrowing of focus: this chapter will revolve around the question of imperial power as it is illuminated by written sources. The principal aim will be to highlight the contributions of the most important written documents to our knowledge of the Flavian principate, as well as critical debates they have given rise to, and the challenges that they continue to present. Material sources will be discussed more briefly, with an eye to what they bring to our knowledge of imperial power and its representation.

1 Literary sources

The essential list of literary sources on the Flavian period has not changed recently or even in the last century. The same “classical” authors still provide the point of departure for any research about the Flavians: above all, the *Histories* of Tacitus and Suetonius’

biographies, with much to be gleaned as well from the *Epigrams* of Martial and other poetry. But if the sources themselves have not changed of late, critical approaches to them have. Recent studies of Flavian authors have demonstrated that the understanding of literary sources is conditioned by a number of factors that must be taken into account. The first of these is the literary genre to which each work belongs: one should not, for example, treat the testimony of a poem in the same way as that of a biographical or historical account. There were precise generic rules that an author was more or less obliged to follow, and these had an important influence on the essence and tone of a particular treatment of the emperor or members of his family and inner circle. That it was dangerous openly to criticize the reigning *princeps* was as true for poets as it was for other writers – and here it should not be forgotten that Domitian was known for his passion for poetic composition. Generic convention might further limit the scope for a poet, especially one writing on mythological themes, to address contemporary issues and concerns. But it is also true that there were oblique and figurative modes of expression that allowed for critique of the powerful in encrypted form. It should, moreover, not be forgotten that some expressions of apparently servile praise and adulation of an emperor, such as that found in the *Panegyric* of Trajan by Pliny the Younger, could serve as a way of delineating the qualities of an ideal ruler, thereby applying protreptic pressure for conformity to those standards.

The second factor to consider in assessing the contribution of literary sources to our knowledge of the Flavian period is the date of their composition. In this regard, an important break occurs in 96 CE, the year of Domitian's assassination and the advent of a new imperial dynasty. This chronological dividing-line does not merely indicate whether or not a given author was a contemporary witness to the events of the Flavian dynasty. From a political point of view, it marks the beginning of a systematic tendency of authors – including some who had previously expressed positive views – to blacken the principate of Domitian. This denigration served to emphasize by contrast the merits of the new ruling dynasty, and of Nerva and Trajan in particular, presented as the guarantors of a new golden age. Here the crucial question is whether we should follow the prevailing historiographical trend and be wary of these judgments *post eventum* or, rather afford them a measure of credibility. What is at stake in this debate is nothing less than the merits of attempts to rehabilitate the last Flavian emperor, which began more than a century ago with the work of Stéphane Gsell (1894) and have proliferated in the scholarship of recent decades (Jones 1992; Southern 1997).

The third and final factor to be taken into account in assessing a literary source is what we know of a given author's life: surviving biographical information often supplies clues as to how writers viewed their world, as well as their relationship to imperial power. Such assessment of the circumstances and conditions of production of particular works allows us better to “decode” the historical testimony they provide. That, broadly speaking, the Greek and Latin sources for the period constitute a literature written by aristocrats for aristocrats is crucial. What follows is a brief overview organized by date of composition and the literary genre.¹

Much like the Augustan Age before it, the Flavian Age sees a rich profusion of Latin poetry. This was evidently encouraged by the new regime – in no small part through Domitian's creation of new artistic competitions: the quinquennial *Capitolia* at Rome and the annual festival in honor of Minerva, celebrated at his Alban villa under the name

Juvenalia (see CHAPTER 21, LITERARY CULTURE, section 1). Relations between the *princeps*, especially Domitian, and poets were often marked by mutual interest and a form of reciprocity: the emperor needed poets to broadcast a positive image of his reign, while poets looked to imperial patronage to enhance their social position (for such bestowal of dignity and popularity, see Le Doze 2009). Praise of the *princeps* and his family in poetry of the Flavian period should not, however, be regarded as naive panegyric. On the question of imperial representation, poetic production has given rise to widely contrasting assessments. It has been regarded both as a court literature in which one cannot expect even the slightest criticism of those in power, and as a subversive literature that expresses criticism in encrypted form. Such monolithic views are to be rejected in favor of more nuanced conceptions permitting us to see even encomiastic poetry as the product of a complex dialogue that casts the poet neither as a mere instrument of “propaganda” nor as an opponent of the imperial regime. The prevailing view today is that encomiastic literature, far from being purely servile, constructs a portrait of imperial power fashioned as an ideal against which the *princeps* might measure his own conduct and towards which, where failing, might strive (Rosati 2011). It thus becomes a form of communication whereby the *laudans* – the poet – could transmit an indirect message to the *laudatus* – the *princeps* – concerning his conception of imperial power and the manner it was to be exercised. The result is that the poetry of Flavian period tells us a good deal not only about the excesses of Domitian – here we might think of Statius’ description of the colossal statue of Domitian placed in the Forum (*Silv.* 1.1) – but also about the idealizing notions of the nature and exercise of imperial power that circulated in Flavian Rome.

Epic poetry was very much in vogue during the Flavian period, as the surviving work of Valerius Flaccus, Statius, and Silius Italicus amply attests. These writers well represent the prevailing literary tastes of the age, and Domitian’s reign in particular, through their reworking of mythological and historical subject matter. The subject matter notwithstanding, their poetry is anything but detached from its contemporary context and, without being overtly subversive, it seems to include criticism of the manner in which power was exercised by the last of the Flavian emperors.

The *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus has reached us in incomplete form – it breaks off midway through the eighth book – probably due to the poet’s untimely death around 90 CE.² This epic provides a novel retelling of the well-known myth of Jason and the Argonauts, updated in no small part by recasting the traditional Greek tale along Roman lines. Valerius begins with a flattering invocation of Vespasian, but the subsequent narrative strikes a more ambivalent note. In the recurring exploration of relations between tyrannical rulers and oppressed aristocrats, including elements such as aristocratic suicides in response to imperial death sentences, we can see reflections of contemporary political realities. Without question the aristocratic Roman reader would have noticed the similarities to the political configurations of the principate (Zissos 2009). Statius (more fully Publius Papinius Statius) is another important poet datable to the principate of Domitian. Hailing from Naples, he was born sometime in the 40s and lived at least until in the mid-90s. The author of two extant epics, a *Thebaid* and an unfinished *Achilleid*, Statius is perhaps best known for his collection of shorter occasional poems, the *Silvae*, many of which extol the last Flavian *princeps*. In the five books of the *Silvae* we find many of the central themes of Domitianic policy and ideology: the celebration of

victory over the Germans (*Silv.* 3.3.164–71); construction of public buildings (4.2.60, 4.3.9–10, 5.1.239–41); and the divine character of the monarchy, affirmed through the assimilation of the *princeps* to a terrestrial Jupiter – most strikingly through the identification of the palace on the Palatine built by Rabirius as the residence of the king of the gods (4.2.18–31; see also 1.6.27, 3.4). The last Flavian epic poet active whose work has come down to us is Silius Italicus (more fully Tiberius Catius Asconius Silius Italicus). Born during the principate of Tiberius, his life extends at least until the beginning of the principate of Trajan, at which point he disappears from the historical record. A senator, his career reached its culmination under Vespasian with his appointment to the proconsulship of Asia, an office at the pinnacle of the senatorial *cursus honorum*. Silius' son was himself consul in 94, which enables us to situate him in the imperial court or in a milieu not far removed from it. Written under Domitian, Silius' *Punica* is the longest surviving Latin epic (17 books running to approximately 15 000 verses). It takes as its theme an historical subject, the Second Punic War, a choice that reaches back to two of the earliest Roman epicists, Naevius and Ennius. While this topic offers limited scope for reflection on contemporary political matters, the *Punica* addresses pertinent general themes such as Roman virtues, along with Rome's greatness and its perceived moral decline after the victory over Hannibal (see CHAPTER 22, EPIC POETRY, section 5). The only passage that deals explicitly with contemporary politics is a prophecy *ex eventu* put in the mouth of Jupiter that looks forward to the advent of the Flavian dynasty, anticipating its military success and insisting on its divine origins (*Pun.* 3.594–629).

The case of the epigrammist Martial is complex. A native of Bilbilis in Spain, he has the peculiarity of having begun his literary career under Titus, having been active principally under Domitian and having retired under Trajan, at which point he returned to his native land. Martial produced an abundant oeuvre that provides, through its sketches of everyday life, valuable information about Rome in the late first century CE, while offering a vision of the Flavian establishment that is often close to the official image. Such similarities do not mean he wrote at the express request of the Flavians, but rather that his work often echoes the principal themes of imperial ideology established by Domitian, though it does so in a poetic language that reflects both Martial's own artistic qualities and the genre to which his poetry belongs. In the *De Spectaculis*, a collection of 33 poems published in 80 CE, he celebrates the inaugural games of the Flavian Amphitheater dedicated by the emperor Titus. This collection offers valuable testimony for the central role played by public spectacle at Rome as a venue for communication between the emperor, the Roman aristocracy and the people. Martial is best known for his *Epigrams*, short poems that frequently refer to Domitian, and do so in regard to three aspects, characteristic of that emperor's exercise of power and self-representation: affirmation of the dynastic principle and concomitant hope of a continuing hereditary succession (6.3, 9.1), frequent mentions of Minerva (a favorite deity of that emperor), and flattering references to military campaigns conducted by the last Flavian (especially in books 7–9 on the successful wars waged in 92/93 against the Sarmatians in Pannonia and the Swabians).³ The first of these has elements of continuity with Flavian predecessors, Vespasian in particular; the latter two are rather more particular to Domitian's reign.

Prose literature is represented in the Flavian period by several well-known figures. We begin with Pliny the Elder, author of the *Natural History*, a monumental encyclopedia running to 37 books. A member of the equestrian order, Pliny is the perfect example of

a man devoted to the Roman empire and its emperor. He followed an equestrian career path that saw him hold several procuratorships and led to the prefecture of the fleet at Misenum, in the Bay of Naples, where he died in 79, attempting to satisfy his scientific curiosity by observing the eruption of Vesuvius at close range.⁴ His *Natural History* is a kind of “inventory” of the empire and a monument to the glory of Rome – and not merely because of the wealth of information compiled and offered to the reader (Naas 2002). The production of this encyclopedia is driven by a thirst for knowledge deriving from the needs of an empire whose inventory-taking, initiated with Augustus and perceptible in the work of Strabo, was vigorously resumed once Vespasian had restored peace and order. In this respect it is unsurprising that Pliny, in the preface, chose to dedicate his *Natural History* to the emperor’s “co-regent” and designated successor, Titus, considered both as the first reader and the present and future bearer of a power without which the composition of such an opus could never be achieved or even conceived. More than merely encyclopedic, Pliny’s literary project is driven by moral and ideological impulses that place it in the context of the Flavian restoration following the instability of the late 60s. His method is likewise in accordance with contemporary practice, which favored reliance on earlier literary authorities over the empirical observation of nature.⁵ It is for this reason that Pliny provides in the opening book a list of the many sources he consulted, ordered in his own way, a novelty that contributes to the innovative and paradigmatic character of the *Natural History* (see CHAPTER 29, RECEPTION OF FLAVIAN LITERATURE, section 2.1).

Worthy of passing mention is Quintilian (Marcus Fabius Quintilianus), who was appointed by Vespasian to the new chair of rhetoric in Rome, and who later enjoyed close relations with Domitian. His *Institutio Oratoria*, a teaching manual running to 12 books, offers fulsome testimony for the central position of rhetoric and the teaching thereof in Flavian Rome as it systematically constructs and elaborates upon the Catonian ideal of the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* (“the good man skilled in speaking,” *Inst.* 12.1.1).

Rather more interesting and unusual is the case of Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian who fought against Rome prior to joining the Flavians and becoming, as his name suggests, both a Roman citizen and a close associate of the new dynasty. Josephus straddles two cultures, Jewish and Greek, in a world under Roman dominion. His literary oeuvre, written in Greek, illuminates the history of his own people along with the unfolding of the recent Jewish revolt and the closely associated sequence of events that led to the emergence of the Flavian dynasty. Leaving aside the *Against Apion*, a forensic plea *pro domo* delivered in 93–94, Josephus composed in Domitian’s reign a compendious work entitled *The Jewish Antiquities* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*) which extends to 20 books and reaches back to the remote past of the Jewish people. Its subject matter notwithstanding, this account is inflected by the Roman context of its composition. In addition, the importance that Josephus attaches to broader institutional issues leads him to discuss Roman matters: to take just one example, he provides the most detailed information we have for the circumstances of the accession of the emperor Claudius (*AJ* 19.236–66). A concern with recent history is reflected in Josephus’ other major work, the *Jewish War* (*Bellum Judaicum*), describing the conflict of 66–73 CE, which pitted his homeland against his adopted country. The Flavian dynasty is at the heart of this account, and it is not surprising that it is presented in a positive light. The proximity of Josephus to the new regime makes him a valuable witness, capable of understanding the Flavian

political program, and of transmitting elements of its “official” version. It is through his detailed account of the joint triumph of Vespasian and Titus over Judea (*BJ* 7.123–57), held in June 71, that Josephus makes clear the extent to which this event was perceived by contemporaries as a political and dynastic turning point. This magnificent triumph marked the first occasion upon which all three members of the new imperial family were reunited in Rome (Domitian also participated in the procession, but riding on horseback rather than in a chariot). It amounted to a public celebration of the end of wars and the official birth of a new dynasty heralding an era of renewed stability.

Mention must also be made of certain authors writing in the early second century CE, that is, shortly after the assassination of Domitian. Well-known literary figures such as Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, Martial (in his post-Flavian guise) and Juvenal have in their different ways transmitted a decidedly negative image of the last Flavian emperor. Through contrast, whether explicit or implied, with the early Antonine emperors, they give expression to the idea that contemporary Rome – and its senatorial class in particular – was experiencing a new golden age after the excesses of Domitian’s principate (Ramage 1989). Various modern attempts to rehabilitate Domitian have led to critical assessments of the testimony of these authors as offering the perspective of an aristocracy – senatorial and equestrian – that was mistreated in the later years of Domitian’s reign. While it is true that these authors either downplay or ignore – whether knowingly or unknowingly does not matter – Domitian’s military and administrative achievements, their testimony should not be dismissed on the doubtful grounds that they were under the influence of a hypothetical early Antonine “propaganda.” If the repeated condemnations of Domitian in Pliny the Younger’s *Panegyric* offered a ready and effective means of praising Trajan within the framework of an enthusiastic eulogy of the new *princeps*, it should not be assumed that the same strategy automatically suited other authors of the early Antonine period – particularly as they were composing in different genres. Indeed, it would be profoundly misguided to put on the same footing as Pliny’s *Panegyric* such diverse works as Martial’s *Epigrams*, Juvenal’s *Satires*, the historical works of Tacitus, and the biographies of Suetonius.

The last-mentioned author, born sometime around the 70s CE, probably at Hippo in North Africa, constitutes, from a historiographical perspective, our most important source for the Flavian period. Suetonius consolidated the three Flavian emperors into a single chapter, the eighth, whereas an individual chapter had been dedicated to each of the Julio-Claudians, from Caesar to Nero. The three Flavian biographies, indeed, offer the only continuous narrative of the dynasty that has come down to us – aside from summaries belonging to much later periods, which are themselves partly dependent upon his account. Suetonius does not provide an account in strict chronological order, preferring to proceed “by categories” (*per species*), as he sketches out the contours of “good” and “bad” emperors. He famously supplies a wealth of suggestive information on the Flavians – for example on the obscure and modest origins of this *gens* (*Vesp.* 1.1), on the omens foretelling their rise to power (well discussed in Vigour 2001), and on the circumstances of birth and death of the three emperors. Suetonius’ individual portraits of the Flavian emperors are morally inflected according to aristocratic notions of imperial power and offer striking contrasts. Titus, “the darling and delight of the human race” (*Tit.* 1), is afforded the most favorable biography of all the *Lives*, being praised in particular for his generous spirit. Vespasian is also very positively treated, his only shortcoming

being avarice (*Vesp.* 16.1 *sola est, in qua merito culpetur, pecuniae cupiditas*), and even that is nuanced (16.6). Domitian, though, is depicted as a full-blown tyrant: cruel, greedy, and bloodthirsty. Beyond these portraits, it is worth observing that the Flavian chapter records the greatest number of witticisms uttered by its protagonists (for the possible existence of a collection accessed by Suetonius, see Gasco 1984, 319). These offer useful insights into the minds and characters – rather caustic in the case of Vespasian – of the three emperors. It is well known that Suetonius had access to various sources by virtue of the offices he held in the imperial bureaucracy under Hadrian (as part of an eminent equestrian career): he was successively secretary of studies (*a studiis*), of libraries (*a bibliothecis*) and of imperial correspondence (*ab epistulis*).

Our knowledge of the Flavian period also owes much to the writing of Tacitus, and his *Histories* in particular. This work has not survived the vicissitudes of transmission intact: only the first four books and part of the fifth are now extant. It has become a commonplace of modern historians to lament the loss of the rest of the work, but what we have still provides the most detailed account of the pivotal years 69–70 to have reached us. In addition to the *Histories*, Tacitus' *Agricola*, a short treatise devoted to the life of the author's titular stepfather, usefully traces out the career of a prominent and capable senator whose most significant offices were held under the Flavians. In it the emperors Domitian and Trajan are pointedly contrasted, the latter being praised for having restored the senatorial *libertas* that had been suppressed by the former – including restrictions on freedom of expression and publication (*Agr.* 2–3, cf. also 44.6). Tacitus' primary purpose, of course, is to transmit to posterity the deeds and character of a senator who was close to him personally as well as being a relative by marriage. This task is more difficult, the author laments at the opening of his work, in an age that no longer recognized the merits of individual aristocrats as readily as before (*Agr.* 1.1 and 1.4; cf. also 46.4). But the *Agricola* is also a document about the administration of the Roman empire under the Flavians, dealing with both Roman military expansion in Britain and the duties of the provincial governor in his dealings with subject peoples. In this respect Tacitus emerges as a historian of imperialism who has perceived only too clearly uncomfortable truths associated with the necessity of provincial integration and consequently developed an ecumenical vision not without criticism of Roman abuses, including a famous speech put in the mouth of the British chieftain Calgacus (*Agr.* 30–2; for Tacitus on Roman imperialism, see Questa 1998).⁶

The final author to be taken into account is the poet Juvenal, who wrote a series of 16 satires in the early second century. Of the author's own life we have little secure information; in the *Satires* he decries the perceived faults of his time and is thereby led to make reference to the Flavian period during which he lived. For the most part, the Flavian emperors do not appear as central figures; but one poem, *Satire* 4, takes Flavian power and its operation as a principal thematic concern. Juvenal's purpose is ironic: he describes the conduct of an imperial council (*consilium principis*) convened to decide how to cook a gigantic turbot, which, on account of its prodigious size, was presented to Domitian at his Alban villa. It is of course the contrast between the solemnity of the gathering and the triviality of its agenda that generates the humor of the piece. Domitian is the target of the bulk of the poet's disparagement and sarcasm. He is depicted as a tyrannical (*Sat.* 4.86) and vicious (4.85, 150–2) ruler who lives in luxury (4.38, 137), encourages the practice of informers (4.47–52), and pushes his advisers to praise him

rather than express independent opinions (4.67–9, 116–29). This portrait corresponds to the negative characterization of the Domitianic principate that figures more briefly in other satires (2.29–81, 6.82–113, 7.80–92), where the emphasis is on the lack of *libertas* under the last of the Flavians. Such disparagement of the recent past should not, however, lead us to regard it as written in the service of Trajan. The very nature of Juvenal's work prohibits such a conclusion; it should instead be observed that the intrigue revolving around the fate of the unfortunate turbot uses established common-places about Domitian in order to enhance the satirical effect. This is a sign that the last Flavian had (already) been extracted from objective historical discourse to become the prototype of the “bald Nero” (*calvo Neroni*, *Sat.* 4.38), and thereby round out the already crowded gallery of “mad” emperors.

From authors writing after the Antonine period, we have accounts that are less valuable for being both more remote in time from the Flavian Age and less detailed in their treatment. Cassius Dio might have been a partial exception: he discussed the Flavian dynasty in Books 67 and 68 of his *Roman History*, but this part of the Greek historian's *magnum opus* has been lost, and we must settle for anthologies and abstracts from the Byzantine period (Constantinian *excerpta* from the tenth century, some entries in the *Suda*, and, most importantly, the abridgments of Xiphilin and Zonaras). Mention should also be made of abridgers from late antiquity such as Aurelius Victor and Eutropius, though such treatments offer no new data; they merely reiterate an established historiographical tradition, drawing on Suetonius in particular for portraits that set the virtues of the first two Flavian principates against the many excesses of the third.

2 Epigraphic evidence

In contrast to their literary counterparts, epigraphic sources for the Flavian period have significantly increased in number over the last century. Hundreds of newly discovered Greek and Latin inscriptions from the Roman world are published every year – the reader is referred to *L'Année Épigraphique*, which offers a systematic annual inventory – many of which are dated to the Flavian period. The steady influx of fresh evidence, arising in large part from archaeological projects, has revised our knowledge and understanding of the Flavian period in a variety of areas. The Augustan “revolution” had given rise to an increase in the production of Latin inscriptions throughout the Roman empire, especially in Italy and in the western part of the Mediterranean. This new “epigraphic culture” was consolidated under the Flavians, and even strengthened in regions such as the Iberian Peninsula, in connection with patterns of municipalization.

Our understanding of local governance has been significantly enhanced by the ever-expanding body of epigraphic evidence. To take just one example, the discovery in the 1980s in Andalusia (southern Spain) of the *Lex Irnitana*, that is, a law passed in the Roman town of Irni, has provided historians with a wealth of new data that will be discussed at the end of this section. With respect to imperial power, the situation has proven to be somewhat more static. Recent decades have seen no dramatic advances in epigraphic documentation on the fundamental question of the evolution of imperial power in the post-Augustan principate; there has been no discovery comparable to the Tiberian *senatus consulta* regarding Germanicus, unearthed principally in Andalusia over

the past three decades. For the Flavian Age, the point of departure remains a law concerning Vespasian's investiture, widely referred to as the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, and usually dated to late 69 or early 70.⁷ Known and discussed since the Middle Ages, the content of this law continues to pose problems and give rise to heated critical debate. The *Lex* is a document unique in its kind, since we know of no other law of imperial investiture (the full text and translation are provided in APPENDIX 4). It survives in the form of a bronze tablet, now housed in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. This tablet, it should be noted, is the final, and lone extant, member of a series: there were originally one or more preceding tablets that are now lost. The *Lex* is divided into eight clauses that define the authority of Vespasian in the following areas: rights in affairs of war and peace, including that of concluding treaties without prior authorization (I); powers of the emperor in relation to the senate (II and III); the right of *commendatio* to all elected offices (IV); the right to extend the *pomerium* (V); power commonly referred to as "discretionary" but probably limited to particular spheres, to take measures deemed appropriate to promote the welfare of the state in sacred and secular matters, as well as in public and private law (VI); exemption from certain laws and plebiscites (VII); retroactive ratification of all acts of the emperor prior to the vote of investiture (VIII). The law concludes with a *sanctio* (sanction) that declares its superior authority to that of any other laws with which it might be in conflict.

Though the document defines itself as a *lex*, and the concluding *sanctio* is characteristic of comitial legislation, the clauses themselves are formulated in the manner characteristic of *senatus consulta* (in particular, the use of the subordinating conjunction *uti* followed by the present subjunctive to introduce the various clauses); this suggests that the *comitia* ratified the senate's resolution in a perfunctory manner that was typical of the early imperial period (see Brunt 1977, 95–6). We find a similar pattern in a law passed in 19 CE by the Roman people on funeral honors to be granted to Germanicus, part of which is preserved in the *Tabulae Hebana* and *Siarensis*.

Though clearly offering fundamental testimony on the nature, legal basis, and evolution of imperial power, the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* nevertheless poses rather more questions than it provides clear and consensual answers. The issues it raises are of such daunting complexity that its authenticity was often called into doubt between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries (Ferrary 2009). Such doubts have since been banished, but modern scholarship remains some distance from resolving the various problems, both general and on the level of detail, arising from an analysis of the *Lex*. There are three principal issues that have been and continue to be the object of intense critical debate. The first is the history of the transmission of the *Lex*. The famous bronze tablet may have been discovered as early as the eleventh century, and certainly no later than the end of thirteenth. Its political use by Cola di Rienzo in the middle of the fourteenth century and its "fortune" from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries are topics very much in vogue in recent scholarship. A striking piece of evidence, which has generated ongoing critical debate, is provided by an anonymous chronicler – identified by Billanovich with Bartolomeo di Iacovo da Valmontone, an acquaintance of Petrarch. The chronicler describes the scene of presentation of the law to the people in the Roman Basilica of St John of Lateran by Cola di Rienzo in 1346 and reproduces the content of the clauses of the law as it was presented by the latter. It has long been wondered whether Cola had knowledge of an additional bronze tablet, and if so, whether the anonymous chronicler's

report could be used to restore clauses not attested on the single bronze tablet that has come down to us. In recent scholarship the affirmative view of Sordi (1971) has been endorsed by Purpura (1999), but a more skeptical stance is taken by Collins (1998) and Ferrary (2001, 151). A reference made by the anonymous chronicler to the right to re-channel the course of rivers is crucial in this regard, as it prompts us to ask whether such jurisdiction would have fallen within the framework of enumerated imperial powers, as well as whether it would have been appropriate to the context of Vespasian's principate (only critics responding in the affirmative, like Bruun 2009, will be receptive to the possibility that Cola had knowledge of parts of the *Lex* now missing).

Unanimity has also proved elusive with regard to the second issue, namely, the precise stage of investiture at which the powers specified by the *Lex* were conferred on Vespasian. Did the *Lex* confer *en bloc* all imperial powers (tribunician power, *imperium* and supplementary powers), one of the two main powers (tribunician power or *imperium*) along with a series of supplementary powers, or just a series of supplementary powers? Its content makes clear that supplementary powers were granted to Vespasian that were additional to the prerogatives defined by *imperium* and tribunician power, but the loss of at least one preceding tablet does not allow us to impose one solution rather than another (cf. the attempted synthesis of Ferrary 2001, 150–4).

The third and final issue concerns whether the *Lex* was an established measure, that is, a form of legislation passed on each imperial accession from at least the reign of Caligula, or whether it was, to the contrary, promulgated for the first time for Vespasian, as an expedient to compensate for the lack of *auctoritas* intrinsic to a figure of comparatively modest origins inaugurating a new dynasty. The first alternative has held the status of *communis opinio* since the foundational study of Brunt (1977); more recently, though, the scholarly trend has been to qualify or challenge this assumption. The theory of the essential novelty of the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* depends on the assumption that this law is specifically related to the context of 69, that it constitutes an unprecedented attempt to provide a legal basis for imperial authority. In other words, it will have recognized *ex lege* Vespasian's right to do what his predecessors had done by virtue of their *auctoritas*.⁸ But this is to reach beyond the limits of what the balance of evidence permits us to conclude. It is certainly *in itself* conceivable that the disappearance of the Julio-Claudian dynasty led the incipient regime to propagate one or more majestic laws of investiture, and that it is the very novelty of this expedient that accounts, in part, for the preservation of the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*. But it would be ill advised to ignore the evidence of sources indicating that all imperial power was formally conferred by law, and that, moreover, the circumstances of his accession had encouraged Caligula to have his imperial powers vested through legislation. Suetonius' well-known references to the obscurity of the *gens Flavia* (*Vesp.* 1.1) and Vespasian's initial lack of *maiestas* and *auctoritas* (*Vesp.* 7.2) do not suffice to counteract the weight of evidence for the existence of prior laws conferring some or all of the imperial powers, or, indeed, the testimony of Tacitus that following the death of Vitellius Vespasian received "all the powers usually granted to *principes*" (*cuncta principibus solita*, *Hist.* 4.3.3). In the light of such compelling indications it seems incumbent upon proponents of uniqueness to demonstrate the unlikelihood of such a law of investiture prior to the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* – and that demonstration has yet to be made. Finally, it is worth noting a feature of the *Lex* that points to its traditional character, namely, the mention in five clauses of Augustus,

Tiberius, and Claudius as precedents, underscoring that most of the powers granted to Vespasian had been exercised in the past by “good” emperors, whose memory had not been not condemned. As for the clauses in which no reference is made to Julio-Claudian antecedents (III, IV, VIII), the absence of a cited precedent is explained by technical considerations and does not signify Flavian innovation (Hurlet 1993; Mantovani 2005 and 2009).

Another pertinent Flavian epigraphic source consists of a series of fragments belonging to the so-called Acts of the Arval Brothers (*Acta Arvalia*), a record of religious services rendered by members of this priestly college (Scheid 1998). Beyond its obvious value for religious historians, this document refers to various ceremonies commemorating particular acts of investiture of imperial powers (Scheid 1992). The surviving fragments all have to do with the accession of Domitian in 81. The *Acta* report that sacrifices were offered on September 14, September 30 and October 1 in conjunction with three successive steps: Domitian’s acclamation as *Imperator* by the senate following his selection as emperor by the soldiery (the Praetorian Guard in this case); the granting of tribunician power by the *comitia*; the pronouncement of vows for his well-being. This shows that under the Flavians, imperial investiture continued to be a complex process stretching over several weeks and involving various actors (the soldiery, the senate, the *comitia*), as well as acts of different kinds (acclamation, promulgation of *senatus consulta* and laws, public vows).

The contribution of Flavian inscriptions is by no means limited to the juridical sphere and strictly institutional matters. They also provide valuable indications as to how the regime wished to represent itself and how it was perceived outside Rome. Dedications to Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, found throughout the Roman empire, are far too numerous to be enumerated here, but two general features are worth identifying: a strong dynastic emphasis,⁹ and the recurring characterization of Vespasian as a restorer (often through the use of the verbs *restituere* and *reficere* or the nouns *conservator* and *restitutor*).¹⁰ The latter places the rise of the Flavian dynasty in the formal context of a restoration, as was the case when the Principate was founded by Augustus, and points to an imperative, strongly felt in the early years of Vespasian’s reign, to represent the inevitable changes arising from the foundation of the new dynasty within an overarching framework of continuity. The fact that Vespasian undertook the rebuilding and dedication of the Capitol, which was damaged by fire in 69, is thus significant from both a religious and political point of view.

Not to be overlooked are inscriptions marking the *pomerium*, for which there was Claudian precedent. These date to the early months of 75 and indicate the extension of this sacred boundary in connection with the censorship of Vespasian and Titus, held in 73/74. There are four extant *cippi* (boundary stones) along with four restored under Hadrian but reflecting the Flavian layout.¹¹ Their content indicates that, as earlier with Claudius, the reason for this *prolatio pomerii* is the expansion of the empire (occupying the right bank of the Rhine?). It is likely that the new area incorporated by the Flavian extension was a small portion of the space beyond the Tiber, modern Trastevere (Coarelli 2009).

Inscriptions offer precious testimony for the practices and procedures involved in the administration of the empire in the later first century CE. Indeed, they constitute the only manner of source that preserves the content of the three types of imperial ordinances (edicts, rescripts and mandates) for this time, as the legal compilations of later periods do not reach back beyond the principate of Hadrian. One of the best examples is a letter

from Vespasian addressed to the local authorities of Sabora, a city in the province of Hispania Baetica (identified with modern Cañete la Real). The Saborensians had evidently sought permission from the emperor to build a new city, with like privileges to the old, in a better location:

The Emperor Caesar Vespasian Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, holding tribunician power for the ninth time, hailed Imperator eighteen times, Consul for the eighth time, Father of the Fatherland, greets the quattuorviri and decurions of Sabora. Since you have indicated that the smallness of your community results from the constricting effect its physical situation, I authorize you to build a city on the plain, bearing my name, as you desire. I guarantee the revenues (*vectigalia*) that you say you received from the divine Augustus; should you wish additional revenues you must contact the proconsul: I cannot make a decision on such a matter without an indication from him. I received your ordinance on 25 July (77); I dispatched ambassadors on the 29th of the same month. Farewell. The duumvirs C. Cornelius Severus and M. Septimius Severus had this letter engraved in bronze at public expense.¹²

Vespasian's immense power is expressed through his name and titles, and his power to create from afar a new city bearing his gentile name (*Flavia*).¹³ For their part, the Saborensian authorities had the imperial letter engraved, thereby monumentalizing the emperor's generosity in the form of a public record.

Another inscription from the province of Hispania Baetica preserves the only extant rescript from the emperor Titus. It reproduces a letter dated September 7, 79 in which Titus settles a dispute between the *municipium* of Munigua (modern Mulva, 30 km northeast of Seville) and Servilius Pollio, a "tax farmer" (that is, a collector of local revenues or *vectigalia*).¹⁴ When the city refused to pay him what it owed, Pollio appealed to the proconsul, who ruled in his favor. The magistrates and decurions of Munigua thereupon sent an embassy to the emperor to appeal the proconsul's decision. Though such recourse to the higher authority of the *princeps* was standard legal procedure, Titus rejects this one as unjustified and so, in addition to dismissing the appeal, he admonishes the *Muniguenses*, pointing out that they should be subject to a fine for an unjustified appeal. With a customary flourish of *indulgentia*, however, he not only forgoes applying such a penalty, but also grants the *municipium* a remittance of 50 000 *sestertii*. This generosity prompts the local authorities to have the letter engraved and put on display in the city.

This pair of imperial letters from Baetica are, technically speaking, rescripts – that is to say, imperial responses to appeals or petitions made by cities. As such, they illuminate an important aspect of the operation of the imperial administration, which spent an enormous amount of time responding to such requests (on the petition-response model, developed by Millar and still heuristically useful, see most recently Eich 2012). But the imperial administration also had the ability to send instructions to provincial authorities by means of *mandata*, a category of imperial ordinance that survives in much smaller numbers than rescripts. Here again inscriptions play a crucial role in preservation. A case in point is the engraved copy of a *mandatum* from Hama (Syria). The text, translated into Greek, features instructions sent by Domitian to his procurator Athenodorus Claudius, aimed at regulating the use of the *vehiculatio* (the imperial mail service) so as to prevent abuses by the imperial administration.¹⁵

Epigraphy is often the only source we have for precise and detailed information on the management and public life of cities, those fundamental cells of the Roman empire, for

the Flavian period. From this perspective, the Iberian Peninsula constitutes a privileged object of study, as it was a particular focus of all three emperors. The most significant Flavian measure, as well as the best documented, was Vespasian's bestowal of *ius Latii* (the Latin right) to all of Hispania during his joint censorship of 73/74 (Plin. *NH* 3.30). This was a blanket grant of the Latin right to all Spanish cities, with the most favored among them being granted the still higher status of Latin *municipium*. These changes in status explain the comparative large number of bronze inscriptions dating to the Flavian period that document "municipal laws." Such inscriptions were evidently meant to document the institutional procedures to be followed by the community in question in the wake of the grant of *ius Latii*, and thus attest to the transformational impact of Vespasian's measure.

For a long time critical attention was largely focused on the fragments of two inscriptions from, respectively, the Latin municipalities of Malaga and Salpensa, dating to the reign of Domitian. The remains of the two inscriptions were discovered together (a curiosity given that the towns were at some distance from one another) in a brick pit near Malaga in 1861. The longstanding evidentiary importance of these fragmentary *leges* was eclipsed and subsumed by the dramatic discovery in 1981 of the *Lex Irnitana*, also dating to the reign of Domitian, and now housed in the National Museum of Archeology in Seville. This inscription is a charter for a *municipium* in Hispania Baetica, presumed to have been called Irni. The *Lex Irnitana* is the only such law to survive in substantial sections: it essentially reduplicates the contents of the *Malacitana* and *Salpensana*, and contains much more besides. Of the original 10 bronze tablets, six, each with three columns, are almost completely extant (*AE* 1986 333; the edition of Lamberti 1993 merits consultation). This exceptional document attests to the high degree of precision required by its legislator. It defines in a very detailed manner such technical matters as the procedure for the election of city magistrates and the method for selecting ambassadors. The similarity between these municipal laws and the fragmentary legislation recently discovered by Duratón in Hispania Citerior would seem to indicate that these Flavian-era regulations were not confined to the province of Baetica alone within the Iberian Peninsula.

3 Numismatic evidence

Numismatic evidence is hybrid in nature inasmuch as coins almost invariably unite an image and a caption or legend. The visual and the textual thus work in combination to convey the desired "message." One of the main achievements of research on the Flavian age over the last two decades has been more fully to take into account the testimony of coinage and to integrate it into the broader political history of the Flavian dynasty. Coins offer indications both of the image of itself that the Flavian dynasty strove to project and the image of the dynasty as constructed by the various communities of the empire. This dichotomy arises from a division in the authority for minting coins in the Roman empire. In addition to the imperial coinage, issued at Rome or in the provinces by official mints, local and regional authorities were granted limited rights to issue coins (often, but not always, restricted to coins of lower value and baser metals). In the latter case, the coinage was both functionally and symbolically integrated into the Roman system, but the stamps

were designed and approved by the local or regional authority in question. The study of this material has been greatly facilitated by the recent publication of two important reference works covering imperial issues for the Flavian period: the second edition of volume 2 of *Roman Imperial Coinage* (edited by Carradice and Buttrey, replacing the first edition of 1926, and cited as *RIC*²), and the second volume of *Roman Provincial Coinage* (edited by Burnett, Amandry, and Carradice, and cited as *RPC*). For chronological reasons, our examination begins with provincial coinage. The Flavian imperial image was actually born in the East because of the circumstances of Vespasian's accession – including his proclamation as *imperator* in the legionary camp of Nicopolis near Alexandria.

It was not the imperial mints, at Rome or elsewhere, which struck the first coins bearing the image of the new *princeps*, but rather the most important local mints of the East, those of Antioch and Alexandria. Antioch was a logical choice as both the capital of the province of Syria and Vespasian's residence in 69: from that year onwards *aurei*, *denarii* and *tetradrachmas* were struck there (Tac. *Hist.* 2.82; cf. *RPC* 1901–75). Alexandria was an equally suitable location: the second city of the empire, it was here that Vespasian was first declared emperor, made his initial decisions, and stayed regularly throughout the first year of his reign (for the Alexandrian coinage under Vespasian, struck from July to August 69, see *RPC* 2401–61). In fashioning the image of the new *princeps*, the coinage from both mints feature elements that will recur in the imperial coinage: the new dynasty's restorative political program, signaled in part through legends invoking *Libertas Augusta* (*RPC* 1901), on which more below; the characteristic emphasis on the dynastic nature of Vespasian's rule, expressed through the early appearance of the portrait of Titus and, to a lesser extent, that of Domitian; allusions in various forms to Flavian military victory – for example with the figure of an eagle and a palm on the reverse of *tetradrachmas* from Antioch (*RPC* 1936–9 and 1945–6); on the coins of Alexandria are found images of Nike (*RPC* 2402, 2406, 2412, 2417) as well as the restoration of peace resulting from Flavian victory (*RPC* 2401, 2411 and 2422).

The imperial mint at Rome struck its first Flavian coins in 70 – whether before or after the return (*adventus*) of Vespasian in October of that year is unclear. In any event, the Flavian coinage issued from this and other imperial mints can be characterized as conservative in both inspiration and execution. Modeled on the coinage of Augustus, though without mechanical imitation, it is organized around three main themes present in Augustan coinage and adumbrated as well in the coinage of Antioch and Alexandria: the celebration of the “restoration of the *Res Publica*” (*Res Publica restituta*), the dynastic character of the new regime, and the exaltation of imperial victory (see Rosso 2009). These themes were not represented on imperial coins all at once; there was rather an evolution over time.

The theme of the Flavians' restoration of the Roman state featured prominently on coinage from 70–71. This was a way officially to present the Roman empire's first change of dynasty as a political act necessary to restore stability in the political and military spheres after the disastrous events of Nero's reign and the crisis of 68–69. The image of Vespasian as restorer rather than innovator quickly developed as a central element of numismatic representation. The appeal to Augustan precedent is logical in that a century earlier the founder of the Principate had likewise found it necessary to legitimize power

arising from a civil war. Indeed, the analogous circumstances explain why the designers of the Flavian monetary program drew so much inspiration from the Augustan coinage. At the same time, though, they avoided outright mimicry, individuating their treatment through the appropriate inflection of inherited themes. This is evident in the legend of a coin issued in 71 affirming the restoration of *libertas publica*, a cardinal imperial value that harks back to Augustus (cf. *Res Gestae* 1.1) and was invoked by Claudius and Galba in order to denounce by contrast the excesses of, respectively, Caligula and Nero, both of whom were, like Antony, assimilated to the type of the tyrant. A pertinent numismatic precedent in this respect is a *cistophorus* (a silver coin bearing the image of a sacred basket carried in the rites of the god Dionysus/Bacchus) issued from the mint of Ephesus in 28 BCE designating Octavian/Augustus *libertatis p(opuli) R(omani) vindex* (“avenger of the freedom of the Roman people”), a reference to the official “restoration” of the *Res Publica* by Octavian after defeating Antony and returning to Rome in 29 BCE (Hurlet and Mineo 2009). In adapting the formulation, Vespasian preferred to be styled as “defender of public liberty” on a coin whose legend suggests that this title was awarded to him by the Senate and the People of Rome (*SPQR adsertori libertatis publicae*, *RIC² Vesp.* 35, 121–4, 207–10, 252; cf. also *RIC² Vesp.* 63, 82, 87, 137, 141, 173–4, 237, 272, 309–10, 377, 1339, 1345–7, 1384 for reference to *libertas publica*; *RIC² Vesp.* 52 and 88–9 for references to *libertas restituta*). The subtle difference in expression is noteworthy, indicating a desire to project a less vengeful imperial image and to reinforce the legitimacy and perceived legality of the new regime, as seeking first and foremost to “defend” the Roman people (Rosso 2009, 218–20). Besides traditional references to various protective deities of imperial power – for example *Roma* (the personified goddess of Rome), *Fides* (Loyalty), *Aequitas* (Justice), or *Fortuna Redux* (personified Fortune presiding over the emperor’s return to Rome) – we find particularly interesting coin issues, struck from 71 onwards, which make reference on the obverse to *Concordia* (the goddess of Concord). Among the various formulae for invoking this personified deity (who often received particular attention in Roman public discourse after civil strife), we find the legends *Concordia Augusti* (Concord of Augustus) and *Concordia senatui* (either broadly denoting “concord with the senate,” or expressing an implied injunction through the idea that Concord is urging the senate to crown Vespasian) on a sesterce representing Vespasian in military dress holding Victory and crowned by a personification of the genius of the senate holding a laurel branch.¹⁶ Whatever the nuances of signification in this last coin, the broader message is unmistakable: Vespasian expresses a desire to govern in harmony and in close collaboration with the senate.

Coinage also bears witness to the early desire of the new dynasty to ensure its own continuity, an almost obsessive preoccupation to which Suetonius attests in recalling that Vespasian had no compunction about declaring to the senate that “his sons would succeed him or else nobody would” (*Vesp.* 25.1; see also Cass. Dio 65.12 and Eutrop. 7.20.3). Coinage, indeed, is invaluable for providing a virtually continuous testimony on dynastic politics throughout the Flavian period, making it possible clearly to discern significant developments between 70 and 96. The joint image, on the reverse of a coin dated to 71, of Titus and Domitian, who stand facing each other in military attire, each holding a spear and wearing a belt, presents the two brothers in an equal and undifferentiated manner, the only perceptible difference being their respective titles on

the legend (*RIC² Vesp.* 152–4 and 1132–3); we find a number of variations on this association between the two brothers during Vespasian's principate.¹⁷ With Vespasian's image on the obverse, these coins provide a visual expression of a unified dynasty, the father being framed and supported by his two vigorous and capable sons. Early on, though, perhaps from the joint triumph of Vespasian and Titus in June 71, this egalitarian scheme gave way to a more clearly hierarchical one that assigned second place to Titus as the elder son and diminished the prominence and visibility of Domitian as the younger. This development resulted in the formal delineation of distinct iconographic types for each of the two brothers, with an enhanced representation of Titus as sole designated successor. Once again, a resort to Augustan precedent is evident, both in the choice of currency types (which follow those of the Augustan mint) and through the existence in the reigns of Titus and Domitian of so-called "restitution" strikes, which resumed without alteration coin reverses with a dynastic tone from the Julio-Claudian period (for example, coins representing Agrippa, Drusus the Younger or Germanicus; for these strikes, see *RIC² Tit.* 399–497 and *RIC² Dom.* 822–30). Following the death of Titus in 81, Domitian continued the policy of monetary representation of dynastic themes, now showing members of his own dynasty. One of the novelties of the coinage from his reign is the appearance on reverses of various members of the imperial family who were posthumously deified: his brother Titus of course (*RIC² Dom.* 126–31); his son, who died at a very young age before 83 (*RIC² Dom.* 132–6, where the deceased son is associated with his mother Domitia, honored on the right as *Divi Caesaris mater*; see also *RIC² Dom.* 152–5); his niece Julia, daughter of Titus, represented primarily from 90 (*RIC² Dom.* 147 [during her lifetime], 683–4, 717–18, 760, 848–9); Flavia Domitilla, described on the coinage as *Diva Domitilla* (*RIC² Dom.* 146, 157), though whether this is the emperor's mother or sister is uncertain. Worth noting here is the high visibility of female members of the imperial family under Domitian. This is an appropriate dynastic strategy, which was reinforced by the presence on the imperial coinage of the emperor's wife, Domitia, throughout his reign (*RIC² Dom.* 148–9, 678–82, 845–7).

The last major theme to appear on Flavian coinage is the celebration of war and victory, which remained prominent for the duration of the dynasty. Here once again a crucial precedent was provided by Augustus, who had found in the Battle of Actium a victory that contributed both materially and symbolically to the creation of a new regime and the return to peacetime. Very soon after his acclamation in Alexandria, Vespasian reprieved a number of Augustan coin types, some of which may go back to a pre-Actium phase: first of all, images of Mars and Neptune, deities directly associated with the naval victory of Octavian/Augustus' then Victoria (personified Victory) herself, a deity represented in five different guises through the reworking of five Augustan numismatic types.¹⁸ The victory of Vespasian and Titus over the Jews and the triumph of 71 that celebrated it provided the Flavians with an equivalent to the Battle of Actium, which could be exploited in various ways. A very common numismatic image is that of a shackled Jewish captive with various explanatory captions: *Iudaea*, *Iudaea capta*, *Iudaea devicta* (Judea, Judea captured, Judea defeated).¹⁹ An alternative image was that of Vespasian and Titus in military attire with a foot placed on the globe – thereby reinforcing the pretense of the Jewish rebellion as an external war. Later on, the military successes of Domitian in Germany in the 80s gave rise to a very similar coinage, in which the figure

of a captive German replaced that of the Jewish captive (*RIC² Dom.* 274, 351, 397, 463, 525, 632 with the legend *Germania capta*).

4 Iconographic and archeological evidence

Though not dramatically enhanced in recent years, the iconographic and archaeological evidence for the Flavian Age is now more systematically exploited by scholars than previously. The fuller critical engagement with this material has made possible a more comprehensive analysis of the Flavian dynasty. I will limit myself to general remarks, as the subject is too vast to be discussed in detail here; the reader will find more detailed discussions in some of the subsequent chapters of this volume.

For the city of Rome itself, the past two decades have seen the appearance of a body of archeological research that emphasizes the political dimension of urban restructuring that took place during the Flavian period. It now appears that a major thrust of the building program undertaken by Vespasian and Titus was to give back to the Roman people the enjoyment of objects – for example, works of art such as paintings and statues – and spaces that were confiscated by Nero and integrated into his *Domus Aurea* (Golden House, a vast and lavish landscaped villa constructed at the heart of Rome after the fire of 64). It is in this sense that Pierre Gros was able to speak of “demagogic” urban planning under the first two Flavian emperors (Gros and Torelli 1988, 184–6; see Gros 1996, 328). Among the most dramatic construction projects of this kind are the Flavian Amphitheater and the Baths of Titus. Under Domitian, the main achievements were a proliferation of honorary arches (cf. Suet. *Dom.* 13.2) and the erection on the Palatine of the *Domus Flavia*, a large residence that had the appearance of a true imperial palace (Royo 1999).

For Italy and the provinces, Pompeii is an emblematic locus, affording a unique glimpse into the daily life of a city in the Flavian period. Pompeii’s “encasement” after the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 has meant that here, more than anywhere, one can discern the concrete forms taken by public activities in the political and religious spheres (Van Andringa 2009).

It would be impossible within the framework of this survey to discuss in any detail the various discoveries that have been made in the municipal domain. But it should be mentioned in passing that archaeological excavations in the region of San Lorenzo in central Italy have located the village of Falacrinae, identified by Suetonius (*Vesp.* 2.1) as the birthplace of Vespasian, and even uncovered a villa that may have been his natal home (Coarelli, Kay, and Patterson 2008).

With respect to iconography, some recent research has focused on problems of typology. It has been noted, for example, that each of the emperors and other members of the imperial family was assigned a specific capillary arrangement, which might occasionally be changed according to circumstances, and which was broadcast throughout the empire. Suffice it to observe here that the decision to build one or more statues in honor of the emperor or his family was made by different people, depending in no small part on whether the place of erection was Rome or another city. In the former case, the image was more or less controlled by the imperial establishment; in the latter, the initiative usually originated with local agents, often members of the elite, who not only financed the imperial image, but also determined the location and manner of its representation.

Conclusion

Necessarily incomplete, this panoramic survey of the sources used to reconstruct the history of Rome and its empire in the Flavian Age has attempted to introduce a series of themes, many of which will be developed in the subsequent chapters of this volume, from the standpoint of the available evidence. It has proven useful to distinguish between an official discourse, broadcast by the Flavian regime on its own initiative, and the reception of that discourse by the governed and administered – whether senators, the Romans of Rome, Italians or provincials.

The image of themselves that the Flavians wished to project, which might be termed their self-representation, can be examined and studied from a range of sources including epigraphic, numismatic, archaeological, and iconographic. The so-called *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, the markers of the *pomerium*, imperial letters, coins produced in the imperial mints, the new palace built on the Palatine – all this and more besides outlines the contours of an image that Rome's second imperial dynasty sought to shape and control. From an examination of such evidence it emerges that the official Flavian discourse was essentially conservative in character: this was certainly the case under Vespasian and Titus, but it also was also true under Domitian if we accept the analysis of Gering (2012). The primary and preeminent model was Augustus, supplemented by the intermediate figure of Claudius as circumstances required. This conservatism does not, of course, mean that significant change was altogether absent; there is no doubt, for example, that the frequent assimilation of Domitian to Jupiter manifests a certain sacralization of imperial power. But we should not exaggerate the degree of innovation introduced by the Flavians in this respect. Reference to the past was virtually constant, and the broad conservatism of the Flavian approach is symptomatic of a world dominated by the phenomenon of mimesis: change of any kind almost inevitably assumed the guise of restoration. The other significant element of the self-image that the Flavian regime wished to project was its generosity towards the people of Rome and towards provincials. The emperor considered himself, wished to be considered, and was considered a benefactor – in this case the preeminent and unrivaled benefactor of the Roman world. It is this idea that Suetonius underscores when he reports Titus lamenting that he had “lost a day” upon realizing in the evening that he “had not made anyone happy” (*Tit.* 8).

The official discourse is one thing; how it was received, adapted or transformed is another. This is a complex matter, not least because each recipient or addressee constructs his or her own image based on criteria that often elude us (social status, place of residence, proximity to imperial power or lack thereof, literary genre, and so on). With respect to literature, one principle is now widely accepted: we cannot reduce any author of the Flavian Age to a mere agent of imperial propaganda. Indeed, the modern concept of “propaganda” is itself problematic when applied without qualification to the ancient world (Weber and Zimmermann 2003). One consequence is that writers who praise the dynasty, especially poets under Domitian, should not be considered mere mouthpieces of the regime. Their writings are better seen as protreptic communications that encouraged certain patterns of imperial behavior. The same holds for the authors of the early second century, many of whom project a very negative image of Domitian and his reign. The writings of Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, and Juvenal are as much founts of information on Domitian as they are reactions to a form of government that contrasted

with the exercise of power and imperial ideology under Nerva and Trajan. Italian and provincial communities should likewise be included among those who adapted the official discourse according to their own interests. The common language of ruler and ruled is one of the most striking features of the communication between the imperial center and the periphery. In official correspondence, on monuments erected by cities, and in the inscriptions that were associated with those monuments, the Flavian emperor saw himself and was seen as benevolent, righteous and devout (Hurlet 2010). Provincial iconographic sources representing the Flavians in one manner or another provide particularly enlightening testimony about the process of reciprocity involved in the fashioning of such representations. In this case the typologies to be adopted were imposed by the regime, while the decision to raise a statue or relief representing one or more members of the Flavian dynasty was normally left to the discretion of the governed.

Rather than the shaping of public opinion, it is better to think of dialogue or negotiation when considering the relationship between the Flavian dynasty and those – whether, cities, groups or individuals – who have left written or iconographic testimony. One of the major conclusions to be drawn from the various sources from the provinces is that it was a distinct Flavian achievement to have extended and deepened Rome's relationships with provincials, and thus to have contributed to the enduring political and cultural configuration of the Roman empire.

NOTES

- 1 Cf. the recent *Quellenlage*, both succinct and well informed, in Gering (2012, 10–27).
- 2 Valerius' death is reported by Quintilian at *Inst.* 10.1.90 (written around 92–93 CE) as having occurred “recently” (*nuper*), though the precise implication of this elastic adverb remains debated, and consequently the date of composition for the *Argonautica* remains a vexed issue. I follow, for example, Hershkowitz (1998, 246) in concluding that Valerius Flaccus was still alive and writing during Domitian's reign. Various arguments from internal evidence have been made for a Domitianic dating, starting with Syme (1929, 133–4). A useful overview of the debate is found in Stover (2012, 6–26,) though Stover's attempt to limit the period of composition to the reign of Vespasian does not convince.
- 3 Minerva: 1.39.3; 1.76.5; 1.102.2, 4.23.7, 5.5.1, 5.40.1, 6.64.16, 7.1.1, 7.32.3, 10.20.14, 14.179.1–2; military campaigns: 7.1–2, 7.5–8, 7.30, 7.80, 8.2, 8.4, 8.8, 8.11, 8.15, 8.21, 8.26, 8.30, 8.50, 8.55, 8.78, 8.80, 9.31; cf. Henriksen (2002).
- 4 That, at least, was his original motivation for sailing into danger; but in the course of making ready for the scientific excursion, Pliny learned of people imperiled by Vesuvius' eruption and so set out to save them – though carefully recording his observations on the volcano as he proceeded. A detailed account of Pliny's death in the course of this scientific inquiry turned rescue mission is provided by his nephew, Pliny the Younger, at *Epist.* 6.16.
- 5 Though Pliny clearly valued empirical observation, as his reaction to the eruption of Vesuvius shows: *magnum propiusque noscendum ut eruditissimo viro visum* (“being a most learned man, he realized this was an important phenomenon, and one that needed to be examined at closer quarters,” Plin. *Epist.* 6.16.7).
- 6 Here we are reminded of the ubiquity of rhetoric in Rome, which pervaded virtually all literary genres, and helped to make speeches, both as delivered and as reconstructed by ancient historians, a permanent feature of Roman “political culture.”
- 7 *CIL* 6.930 and 31207 = *ILS* 244 = *FIRA* 1.15 = MW 1 = Crawford (1996, 39).

- 8 This is the position adopted by most contributors – including Lucrezi, Venturini, Pani, and Lanza – to Capogrossi Colognesi and Tassi Scandone 2009, a volume devoted to the *Lex de Imperio Vespasiani*, and whose appearance was timed to commemorate the bimillenary of the birth of Vespasian.
- 9 For example, *CIL* 6.932 = *ILS* 246; *IGRRP* 4.211 = MW 136; Khanoussi and Maurin no. 3; cf. also the Greek inscription engraved on a fortress in Iberia in the Caucasus Ibérie, *IGRRP* 3.133 = *ILS* 8795 = MW 237. The strong dynastic emphasis is also evident in the existence of statutory groups featuring Vespasian as father with his two sons or sometimes just one of them, usually Titus, or associating the princesses of the dynasty (Herculaneum group; Pinara group, dated 82–91, *IGRRP* 3.573).
- 10 *CIL* 6.931; *CIL* 6.31208 = 933; *CIL* 6.934 = *ILS* 252; *CIL* 6.936; *CIL* 14.3485, cf. also *ILS* 3781.
- 11 Flavian copies: *CIL* 6.31538a; *CIL* 6.1232 = 31538b = *ILS* 248; *CIL* 6.31538c; *CIL* 6.40854. Restored *cippi*: *CIL* 6. 1233 = 31539a; 1233b = 31539c; 31539b; 40855.
- 12 *CIL* 2. 1423 and *CIL* 2.² 5 871 = *ILS* 6092 = *FIRA* 1.74 = Bruns⁷ 81 = MW 461 = González *BJRA* 12; cf. Hurlet (2006), 270 and (2010), 141–2; the inscription has been lost.
- 13 On a more concrete level, McFayden (1921, 47) points to various signs of encroachments upon senatorial authority in this letter. So, for example, as Hispania Baetica was a senatorial province, the proper authority to make the final decision on an expansion of revenue would be the senate, not the princeps.
- 14 *AE* 1962 288 = González *BJRA* 13; cf. Le Roux (1999) and Hurlet (2006), 270–1.
- 15 *IGLSyr* 5.998 = *SEG* 17.755 et *SEG* 19.880 = MW 466 = Oliver 1989 no. 40.
- 16 *Concordia Augusti*: *RIC² Vesp.* 8–9, 155, 228, 262–7, 291–8, 357, 391, 434, 442, 480–81, 485, 493–4, 567–8, 579, 613, 623, 1348–9, 1380, 1394, 1400, 1409, 1415–16, 1428, 1438, 1446, 1453, 1456, 1460, 1464, 1468–9; *Concordia senatui*: *RIC² Vesp.* 67.
- 17 *RIC² Vesp.* 5–6, 13, 15–16, 37, 54–6, 64, 66, 1122–6, 1301–02, 1318, 1320–21, 1344, 1362–4, 1376–8, 1387, 1401–05, 1410–11, 1417–20, 1424, 1429–30
- 18 Images of Mars and Neptune: *RIC² Vesp.* 22–5, 39, 44, 90–94, 175–8, 238–9, 358, 365–6; images of Victoria: *RIC² Vesp.* 14, 47–8, 57–8, 61, 65, 127–32, 140, 212–26, 255–6, 328–39, 355, 361–4, 283–5, 367, 389–90, 412, 463–4, 508, 511, 525–7, 536, 560–61, 565–6, 572, 602–05, 641–3, 649, 676–8, 709–11, 732–6, 753–5, 790–812, 824–6, 855, 897–903, 916, 934, 946, 955–6, 1013–20, 1035–8, 1055–6, 1089, 1094–5, 1103, 1128–9, 1175–7, 1203, 1241–2, 1284, 1340–41, 1343.
- 19 *RIC² Vesp.* 1–4, 51, 59, 68–9, 81, 134, 159–69, 233–6, 271, 303–08, 375–6, 422, 433, 445, 452–3, 457, 495, 501–03, 562–4, 626, 1117–20, 1134, 1181, 1204–5, 1233, 1245–6, 1268–9, 1315–6, 1332, 1357.

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FURTHER READING

In the case of so wide-ranging a survey, recommendations for further reading must be limited to a few useful studies addressing specific topics. On the postmortem literary response to Domitian's principate, Ramage (1989) makes many important observations of broad import through his study of the case of Juvenal. For the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, the studies of Brunt (1977) and Hurllet (1993) remain particularly valuable. On the complex question of how the imperial center communicated with the periphery in the early imperial period, Eich (2012) provides a helpful overview of the state of scholarship while adding incisive observations of his own.

PART II

Dynasty

CHAPTER 2

The Remarkable Rise of the Flavians

Frederik Juliaan Vervae

1 The municipal elites and the coming of empire

In terms of real political power, there was only one group of Roman citizens that truly lost out in the civil wars that marked the end of the Republic (49–30 BCE), namely those few powerful families of the consular nobility that had controlled the Roman political system for centuries. The very fact that during the Republic's final century only very few "new men" (senators without consular ancestry) managed to reach the consulship, Rome's highest annually elected office, speaks volumes about the strongly oligarchic and plutocratic nature of the Roman aristocracy which dominated the republican polity (Wiseman 1971). In addition to their sudden political decline, their numbers, too, inexorably dwindled under the Julio-Claudian dynasty, partly as a result of natural attrition, and in part due to recurrent waves of political purges by ruling emperors. Nonetheless, many of their descendants still managed to play a significant role under Rome's first dynasty, often as showcase props of the regime married into the *domus Augusta*.

On the one hand, Roman society would always remain highly inegalitarian, with patronage (*patrocinium*) and political friendship (*amicitia*) more than ever and at all levels forming the vertical and horizontal cement of the administrative and military machinery (see, for example, Plin. *Epist.* 2.13.1–4). On the other hand, the establishment of a monarchical regime by Julius Caesar and Augustus, with its professional army and a salaried and steadily growing imperial bureaucracy created unprecedented opportunities for aspiring members of the equestrian and municipal elites. At first, the quite paradoxical process of what could be termed the imperial democratization of the Roman gubernatorial apparatus was mostly, though not exclusively, confined to members of the Italian municipal elites. The sensational careers of P. Ventidius Bassus and the Cornelii Balbi offer early and famous examples of this consequential development in Roman history. Born in Picenum in central Italy, the young Ventidius Bassus had been paraded in 89 BCE as a captive in the triumph of the consul Cn. Pompeius Strabo over vanquished Italian

allies. Siding first with Julius Caesar and next Marcus Antonius, he secured a suffect consulship in 43 and went on to celebrate an unprecedented triumph over the Parthians in 38, receiving a public funeral soon after. The fortunes of the Cornelii Balbi from Gades in Spain, who acquired Roman citizenship at the instance of Cn. Pompeius Magnus in 72 BCE, indicated what the imperial system would have in store for talented members of the provincial elites. In 40, L. Cornelius Balbus, a staunch partisan of Caesar's adoptive son, *Imperator Caesar Divi filius* (a.k.a. Octavian or, from 27 BCE, Augustus), became Rome's first ever consul of provincial descent. Augustus honored his nephew L. Cornelius Balbus with a pontificate, consular rank as well as the prestigious proconsulship of Africa. In 19 BCE, Balbus the Younger also was the last ordinary senator ever to celebrate a full public triumph as well as the only citizen not born a Roman to achieve this distinction. In a sense, it is fair to say that the last senatorial triumph also represents the first triumph of the provincial elites. Another seemingly paradoxical outcome of the establishment of an enduring imperial autocracy was a gradual improvement in the treatment and fortunes of the provincial high society. When Aemilius Rectus, the prefect of Egypt, sent more tax money than was stipulated, the emperor Tiberius famously wrote back to him the message that he wanted his sheep shorn, not shaven (Cass. Dio 57.10.5).

That contemporaries were keenly aware of these structural changes is clear from Velleius Paterculus' eulogy of Tiberius. Among other things, Velleius praises Augustus' successor for the fact that under his rule "the provinces have been freed from the oppression of the magistrates; honor ever awaits the worthy; for the wicked punishment is slow but sure; equity has now precedence over influence, and virtue over ambition" (2.126–8). Although there is certainly exaggeration in Velleius' words, he was right to observe that the lack of lineage now proved far less of an obstacle to reaching positions of great power and influence than it had been under the republican oligarchy, especially as far as members of the municipal and equestrian elites were concerned. Commenting on Nero's decision to appoint Cn. Domitius Corbulo (*suff.* 39) to the formidable task of restoring Roman influence in Armenia in the autumn of 54, Tacitus, too, alludes to this new reality, albeit with a ring of cynicism and his customary phlegm: "a place appeared to have been made open for virtues" (*Ann.* 13.8.1). Although Corbulo himself had been suffect consul under Gaius in 39 and subsequently gained a reputation as a capable commander under Claudius as governor of Germania Inferior, his father had probably been the first in the family to reach the office of praetor under Tiberius. All these talented new men needed to show was loyalty to the ruling emperor(s), a quality that was proudly advertised on the epitaph of L. Vitellius (*cos. ord.* 34, *ord.* II 43, *ord.* III 47) by decree of the senate: "Of unwavering loyalty to his prince". This three-time consul, whose son briefly usurped the imperial purple in 69 (see later in this chapter) during the so-called Year of the Four Emperors, was the son of a mere *equus Romanus* from Nuceria who had been a *procurator Augusti* (Suet. *Vit.* 2–3).

2 Humble beginnings: from Reate to Rome

Suetonius begins his biography of Vespasian by pointing to the humble origins, by Roman standards, of the *gens Flavia*, describing it as "obscure and without ancestral portraits" (*Vesp.* 1.1). Vespasian's paternal grandfather was Titus Flavius Petro, a citizen

of the Sabine town Reate, who had served as a centurion or an *evocatus* (volunteer veteran) in the ranks of Pompeius at Pharsalia. After being pardoned and honorably discharged, he made his living as a debt collector. Vespasian's father, T. Flavius Sabinus, was born from Petro's marriage with Tertulla, a wealthy Etruscan woman. Although some sources claimed that he had been a *primus pilus* (chief centurion) or a regular centurion before retiring because of ill health, Suetonius insists that he did no military service. He served as a tax collector, perhaps as a senior official (*promagister* or vice-director) of equestrian rank, assessing the *portorium* (a 2.5 % public import duty) in the wealthy province of Asia, where he is said to have earned a reputation for honesty. Probably during the latter part of Tiberius' reign, he set himself up as a moneylender (*faenerator*) at Aventicum in the territory of the Helvetii, then part of the province of Gallia Belgica. That his spouse, Vespasia Polla, came from a notable and locally entrenched equestrian family at Nursa, an Umbrian town on the fringes of Sabine territory, further indicates Sabinus' relative standing. Her father, Vespasius Pollio, was thrice tribune of the soldiers and *praefectus castrorum*, meaning that he might have been a *primus pilus*, a rank carrying significant social prestige; her brother managed to become a senator of praetorian rank (*praetorius*). The best indication that the family did well, however, was the fact that both their sons, T. Flavius Sabinus and T. Flavius Vespasianus (= Vespasian) were able to meet the senatorial census qualification of 1 000 000 *sestertii* (Suet. *Vesp.* 1; see Jones 2000, 10–13).

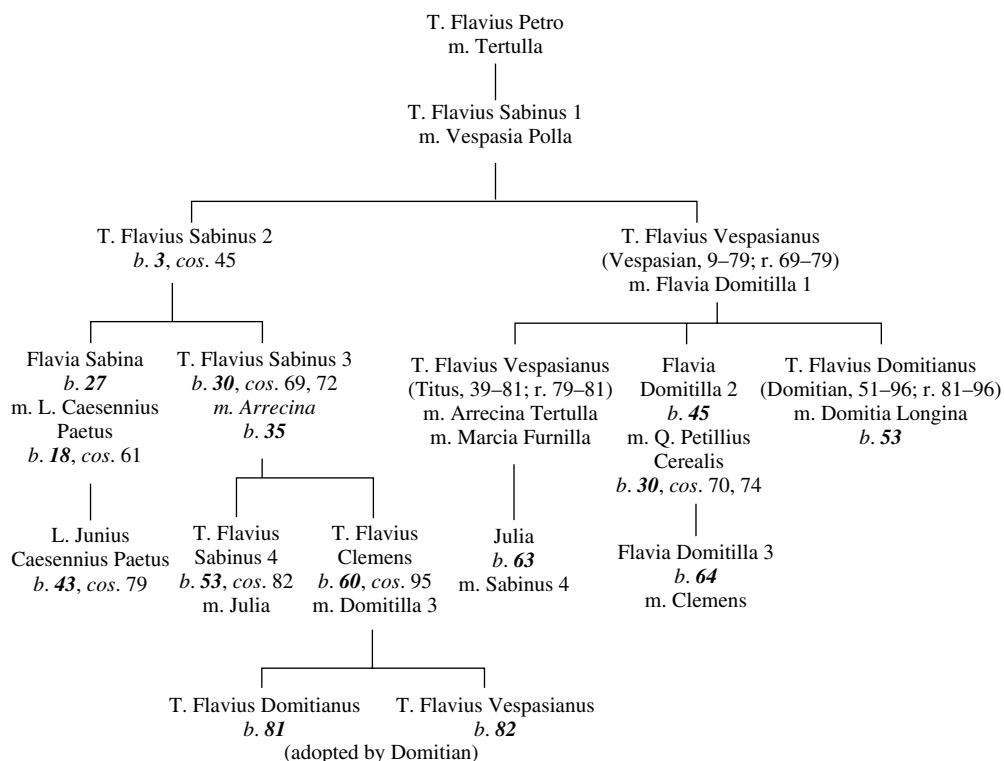


Fig. 2.1 Flavian stemma. After G. Townend, *JRS* 51 (1961) 62

Vespasian, who took his *cognomen* from the *gentilicium* of his mother, was born on November 17, 9 CE at Falacrina, a small village beyond Reate, in the Sabine country. He was raised by his paternal grandmother Tertulla on her estates at Cosa, whence came his up-country accent. Throughout his life, he would remain most devoted to his grandmother and the house of his youth. After he assumed the *toga virilis* around 25 CE it reportedly took his ambitious mother a long time to convince him to follow in the footsteps of his older brother and apply for the right to wear the *latus clavus*, the broad stripe on the tunic, which distinguished members of the senatorial order and was a signal indicator of ambition on the part of aspiring equestrians. After serving as a *tribunus militum* (probably as an equestrian *angusticlavus*) in one of the Moesian legions in Thrace (perhaps *IV Scythica*) around 30 CE, he secured the quaestorship and thus entry into the senate around 35. His older brother Sabinus had probably already held this office in 34, when he was over the minimum age. As quaestor the lot assigned Vespasian to Creta et Cyrenaica, a minor public province in the eastern Mediterranean administered by proconsuls of praetorian rank. At some point in the second half of the 30s Vespasian married Flavia Domitilla. She reportedly had been a Junian Latin before being declared a freeborn Roman citizen in a lawsuit before arbiters brought by her father Flavius Liberalis, suggesting that her mother might have been his freedwoman, having been a concubine who had been freed contrary to the *Lex Aelia Sentia*. Liberalis was a native of the southern Etrurian municipality of Ferentium, half way between Reate and Cosa, and held the office of quaestor's *scriba* (clerk). She bore him three children, Titus, Domitian and Domitilla. Both Vespasian's spouse and daughter died before his successful bid for the throne (Jones 2000, 22–3).

According to Suetonius, Vespasian subsequently “became a candidate for the aedileship and then for the praetorship, attaining the former only after one defeat and then barely landing in the sixth place, but the latter on his first canvass and among the foremost.” In other words, between holding the post of aedile in 38 (when Gaius reportedly had some mud he noticed in an alley thrown on Vespasian's toga, since he was the magistrate responsible for street cleaning: Suet. *Vesp.* 5.3 and Cass. Dio 59.12.3) and the more eminent one of praetor, probably in 40, Vespasian had apparently managed to secure the favor of the insecure and short-tempered young emperor. Suetonius explains that Vespasian owed his sudden favor with Gaius to zealous adulation as he brazenly exploited the young emperor's increasingly tense relationship with the senate. As praetor, he asked for special games to celebrate Gaius' victory over a Germanic tribe and recommended as an additional punishment for the conspirators Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus (*ord.* 26) and L. Aemilius Lepidus that their remains be thrown out unburied. He also thanked Gaius before the senate for honoring him with an invitation to dinner (Suet. *Vesp.* 2.3; Levick 1999, 10–12; Jones 2000, 20–21). Nonetheless, Vespasian did not benefit materially from his servile behavior, as Suetonius (*Tit.* 1.1) records that Titus was born in a very small dark room of a mean house near the Septizonium (Suetonius has December 30, 41; Cassius Dio at 66.18.4 and 26.4 suggests the end of 39, the date preferred by Murison: see CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 1).

3 Claudius and Nero: the Flavians' great leap forward

The Flavians seem to have had a slow start during Tiberius' final years, and Vespasian experienced mixed fortunes under Gaius. The accession of Claudius, however, brought rapid and brilliant advancement for both brothers (see, for example, Suet. *Vesp.* 4.1–2; Cass. Dio 60.20.3; *AE* 1953, 24; *CIL* 6.31293 = *ILS* 984; Tac. *Hist.* 1.46.1 and 3.75.1; Jones 2000, 14). In 41/42, Vespasian received command of *legio II Augusta* in Germania Superior, allegedly on the recommendation of Claudius' influential freedman Narcissus (Tac. *Hist.* 3.44). From there, he was transferred to Britain in 43, where he partook in Claudius' war of conquest, serving mostly under the command of A. Plautius, and briefly under that of Claudius himself. Significantly, his brother Sabinus also served as a *legatus legionis* (*IX Hispana*, *XIV Gemina* or *XX Valeria Victrix*) in the invasion of Britain. Although Flavian writers probably enhanced Vespasian's role in the invasion (he reportedly fought some 30 pitched battles, reduced two powerful tribes and conquered more than 20 strongholds as well as the Isle of Wight), it can be safely assumed that he gained a reputation as a sound and capable military man in this campaign. As Claudius celebrated his British triumph in 44, Vespasian was among those awarded the *ornamenta triumphalia*, while A. Plautius received the – for a proprætorian legate entirely unique – honor of an ovation. Shortly after that Vespasian also received two priesthoods, probably becoming a member of the *septemviri epulonum*, one of the four preeminent priesthoods, plus one of the less prestigious *sodalitates* (Levick 1999, 19; Jones 2000, 29–30). After Sabinus had almost certainly held the suffect consulship in 47 (Syme 1982, 463; *contra* Eck 1975, 339 and Gallivan 1978, 424, both arguing for 44 CE), Vespasian secured his during the final two months of 51 as the colleague of Claudius (Suet. *Dom.* 1.1; Jones 2000, 30). Some scholars accept Suetonius' claim that Vespasian retired after his consulship out of fear of Agrippina, who hated the friends of her enemy Narcissus, who was forced to commit suicide late in 54. It is also speculated that she might have returned to Rome with her husband's (that is, the alleged conspirator M. Aemilius Lepidus, who was executed) ashes at the time of Vespasian's motion that the conspirators be cast out unburied (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.2; Levick 1999, 19–20; Jones 2000, 21 and 30). There is, however, no serious evidence that the rise of Agrippina slowed the careers of the Flavian brothers. Vespasian got his consulship at the normal age for a new man. It was rather his humble origin that accounts for the fact that he held it during the last and least prestigious months of the year. Sabinus went on to command the important military province of Moesia from perhaps 53 to 60 and subsequently received the highly prestigious office of urban prefect in 61 (Syme 1982, 463). At about the same time, Vespasian himself was allowed to cast lots for one of the prestigious consular provinces after a normal interval of about ten years; he is on record as administering Africa around 62 (Thomasson 1978, 42: *proconsul Africae* before 62 CE). He reputedly governed this wealthy province with great integrity. That he was pelted with turnips at Hadrumetum can be ascribed to a food shortage there following the priority shipment of grain to Rome, to compensate for 300 lost grain ships (Tac. *Hist.* 2.97; Levick 1999, 23). Although Domitian's birth (on October 24, 51) in a house on the Quirinal suggests that Vespasian's financial fortunes had somewhat improved, he seemed to have been at risk of falling below senatorial property requirements around the time of his African proconsulship. At his return he had to

mortgage his Roman house and his farms to his brother and got involved in the lucrative mule trade or, perhaps, operated as a transport contractor. Suetonius is adamant that Domitian spent his early youth in relative poverty. Around this time, Vespasian was allegedly also rebuked for squeezing 200 000 *sestertii* from a young man for whom he had secured the *latus clavus* (senatorial rank) against the will of his father (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.3 and Tac. *Hist.* 3.65; Suet. *Dom.* 1.1).

The coming of monarchy had certainly enhanced the chances of aspiring and talented men from the municipal aristocracies. Nonetheless, mere adulation or bribery would have been insufficient for a new man to achieve the kind of success enjoyed by the Flavians under Claudius and Nero. Such rapid promotion required the support of powerful patrons and their familial and political networks (see Saller 1982, 42–52 and 59–69). Tacitus (*Hist.* 3.66) himself provides a critical clue as to where to begin a brief discussion of the senatorial nexus that in all likelihood fostered the careers of Sabinus and Vespasian. As Flavian troops were about to enter Rome in the final stage of the civil war against the forces of Vitellius, the latter's die-hard partisans allegedly tried to exhort him not to make terms, amongst other things pointing out that *Vespasianus [...] Vitellii cliens, cum Vitellius collega Claudio foret* (Vespasian was once a client of Vitellius when the latter was Claudius' colleague). Regardless of the historicity of this argument and the derogatory nature of the remark, Tacitus unequivocally indicates that Vespasian had enjoyed the support of none other than Vitellius' father, L. Vitellius.

A brilliant operator and able commander, this second-best known scion of the *gens Vitellia* built a career unprecedented and unparalleled for a senator under the early Empire. Interestingly enough, his career reached its apogee in the very years that brought the Flavians considerable advancement. First and foremost, he held no fewer than three ordinary (or eponymous) consulships: the first under Tiberius in 34 and the second and third ones under Claudius in 43 and 47. In 43, as Claudius briefly took personal command of operations in Britain, Vitellius was allowed to stay in office for six months and was put in command of the troops in Rome, indicating that he enjoyed the emperor's fullest trust (Cass. Dio 60.21.2). Furthermore, in 47, he held the censorship with Claudius. The son of one Publius Vitellius, an *equus Romanus* from Nuceria and *procurator Augusti*, L. Vitellius had three brothers: Aulus, Quintus, and Publius. Although only Aulus would also reach the consulship, dying in office as suffect consul in 32 (Suet. *Vit.* 2.2), Publius the Younger had, significantly, been one of the most loyal associates of Germanicus Julius Caesar (Tac. *Ann.* 5[6].8.1), son of Nero Claudius Drusus and Antonia Minor, and elder brother of the future emperor Claudius. After serving in the ranks of Germanicus Caesar in Germany as *legatus legionis*, Publius accompanied the heir-apparent to Syria where he witnessed his death in October 19. He subsequently played a prominent role in the successful prosecution of Cn. Calpurnius Piso (*ord.* 7 BCE), bitter enemy of Germanicus. He then became implicated in the downfall of L. Aelius Sejanus (*ord.* 31), Tiberius' overbearing praetorian prefect, and died under arrest after a failed attempt to commit suicide (*DKP* 5, col. 1307; Vervaeke 2002, 137 n. 6). L. Vitellius the triple consul, too, was a loyal supporter of Antonia Minor (Tac. *Ann.* 11.3.1, see also Syme 1986, 141 and 169), and played a critical role in the downfall of Sejanus. Unsurprisingly, he was equally devoted to Narcissus and Pallas, reportedly "the most reliable of Antonia's slaves" who as freedmen went on to become the controlling influence at Claudius' court from 41 until his marriage with Agrippina early in 49

(Joseph. *AJ* 18.182; Suet. *Vit.* 2.5). Vitellius' two sons, Aulus – the future emperor – and Lucius, successively held six-month consulships in 48, with Lucius succeeding to the position of his older brother as suffect consul. This enduring allegiance to the house of Antonia Minor easily explains their remarkable ascendancy, especially under the rule of Germanicus' younger brother Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus *Germanicus* (my italics). It also explains why Aulus eagerly accepted the honorific *cognomen* of Germanicus when proclaimed *Imperator* by the legions of Germania Superior whilst obstinately refusing that of Caesar (Suet. *Vit.* 8.2; Plut. *Galb.* 22.11). Interestingly enough, through his mistress Caenis, Antonia's secretary and freedwoman, Vespasian himself was directly connected with the circle of Antonia. Although Vespasian is said to have suspended the relationship during his marriage to Flavia Domitilla, they became lovers again after his wife's decease until Caenis' death in the early seventies (Suet. *Vesp.* 3; Cass. Dio 65.14.1–2). In this respect, it is also well worth noting that Titus was educated at court with Claudius' son Britannicus and reportedly witnessed the latter's fatal poisoning at a dinner table. After Vespasian's accession to the throne Titus would at any rate carefully cultivate the memory of Britannicus (Suet. *Tit.* 2). Last but not least, the Jewish aristocrats Julius Agrippa II and especially his brother-in-law Ti. Julius Alexander, who would play such prominent roles in the military campaigns of Corbulo and then Vespasian, are equally on record as members of the circle of Antonia Minor (Joseph. *AJ* 18.156, 165; cf. 19.360).

Preeminent among the other senatorial families that probably patronized the Flavians are the influential Plautii and the Petronii, both *gentes* being closely associated with the Julio-Claudian dynasty and the Vitellii. P. Plautius Pulcher, son of M. Plautius Silvanus (*ord.* 2 BCE), proudly styled himself *comes Drusi fili Germanici; avunculus Drusi Ti. Claudi Caesaris Augusti fili*, and adlected *inter patricios* by Claudius as *ensor* (*CIL* 14.3607). Plautia Urgulanilla, daughter of the consul of 2 BCE, became Claudius' first wife around 9 CE. Further, A. Plautius (*suff.* 1 BCE) was married to a Vitellia. A daughter of this marriage, Plautia, was married to P. Petronius (*suff.* 19) and the wife of A. Vitellius (*ord.* 48, the short-lived emperor of 69), Petronia, was most probably their daughter. A. Plautius (*suff.* 29) was married to Pomponia Graecina, probably a daughter of C. Pomponius Graecinus (*suff.* 16), who was himself possibly a kinsman of Q. and P. Pomponius Secundus. These brothers were sons of Vistilia, sister (or close relative) of that Sextus Vistilius who had once been an intimate friend of Drusus and subsequently Tiberius. Foremost amongst Vistilia's other offspring (by different husbands) were P. Suillius Rufus, who served as *quaestor Germanici* in 15 and went on to become a notorious *delator* and close associate of L. Vitellius (*ord.* III 47) under Claudius, Cn. Domitius Corbulo, one of the foremost generals of both Claudius and Nero, and Milonia Caesonia, hapless last spouse of Gaius, whose full name as emperor was C. Caesar Augustus *Germanicus* (my italics). Unsurprisingly, all these sons of Vistilia secured suffect consulships under Gaius and Claudius, and this within a remarkably short span of time: Q. and P. Pomponius in 41 and 44 successively, Suillius Rufus and Corbulo most probably in 41 and 39 respectively. The son of Orfitus (another half-brother of the Pomponii by Vistilia), Servius Cornelius (Scipio) Orfitus was quaestor of Claudius and in 51 became *consul ordinarius* with Claudius as a colleague. The year before, Suillius Rufus' son Suillius Nerullinus had equally held an ordinary consulship. Other members of the Plautii and Petronii who reached consulships between 29 and 37 were A. Plautius

(*suff.* 29, cf. earlier in this chapter), Q. Plautius (*ord.* 36) and C. Petronius Pontius Nigrinus (*ord.* 37), while L. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus became consul before 49 (Vervaeke 2000a, esp. 102–5; Kavanagh 2010).

There is every indication that these families managed to preserve their positions of prominence and power after Claudius' marriage to Agrippina and the subsequent accession of Nero, a situation that persisted even after the murder of Agrippina and the death of Afranius Burrus in 62 had weakened the position of Seneca. P. Petronius Turpilianus, son of P. Petronius (*suff.* 19) was *ordinarius* in 61 with L. Caesennius Pactus, a protégé of the Flavians. About 60, Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus was given the important Moesian command in succession to T. Flavius Sabinus, and one of the *consules designati* for the year 65 was Plautius Lateranus. In 62/63 Servius Cornelius (Scipio) Orfitus, Corbulo's nephew, mentioned earlier in this chapter, was *proconsul Africae* as immediate successor to L. Vitellius (*suff.* 48). Last but not least, in 63, Nero again put Corbulo in charge of Cappadocia-Galatia and entrusted him with overriding authority over all imperial officials and client kings in the Roman East, a decision he took after close consultation with the *primores civitatis*, the leading senators of the day, many of which have been listed in this chapter-section's discussion (Vervaeke 2000a, 105–6).

With regard to what happened in 69, it is useful to note that the Flavians might have indeed (partly) belonged to the same influential nexus from which Domitius Corbulo was able to benefit. Titus was married to the noble Marcia Furnilla. She was the daughter of Antonia Furnilla and Q. Marcius Barea Sura, brother of Q. Marcius Barea Soranus (*suff.* 52), and as such a niece of Servilia, spouse of Annius Pollio, who was a brother of Corbulo's son-in-law Annius Vinicianus. The latter was the son of L. Annius Vinicianus (*suff.* 40), *amicus* of Gaius and a relative of the well-connected Anni and Vinicii, who produced a string of consuls under Tiberius, Gaius, and Claudius. Vespasian was also *amicus* of Thrasea Pactus and Barea Soranus until 66, when these two men perished in Nero's increasingly intense persecution of real and alleged opponents following the so-called Pisonian conspiracy. It was undoubtedly about that time that Titus divorced Marcia Furnilla. It is significant that the *manes* of Barea Soranus were (unlike those of Piso) rehabilitated by Domitianus Caesar in 70 (Vervaeke 2000a, esp. 105–7).

4 A fateful appointment: Vespasian's Judean command

In 66, Vespasian, now a senior consular, was invited by Nero to join him on his notorious Greek tour as one of his *comites* or official travel companions (Suet. *Vesp.* 8). There he put himself at risk, as he either left or fell asleep while Nero was singing. This caused Vespasian to be banned from all public and private companionship with the emperor; he kept a low profile in a small town (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.4). At that time, however, a series of incidents had already set in motion a train of events that would dramatically revive Vespasian's fortunes and change the course of history.

Around May 66, a serious revolt broke out in Judea, triggering the intervention of C. Cestius Gallus (*suff.* 42), the elderly consular legate of Syria with some 30 000 troops, including *legio XII Fulminata* and detachments of 2000 from his three other legions, *IV Scythica*, *VI Ferrata* and *X Fretensis* (Vervaeke 2000b, 294–8 and 2003, 441–2). By the end of November, Cestius' army had been ingloriously repulsed from the walls of Jerusalem,

with the loss of over 5000 men, as well as a legionary eagle; he himself died soon after. Although Syria remained unaffected, the violence spilled over to Alexandria, where Ti. Julius Alexander, the newly appointed *praefectus Aegypti*, decided to unleash his two legions on the Jewish quarter (Levick 1999, 26–8).

On the home front, Corbulo's son-in-law Annius Vinicianus perished after making an attempt on Nero's life at Beneventum in August 66. Vinicianus had been serving under Corbulo as *pro legato* of *legio v Macedonica* in Armenia and had accompanied the Arsacid prince Tiridates to Rome for his coronation by Nero. Outraged by the trials and suicides of Thræsea Paetus and especially Barea Soranus and Servilia, which occurred in about May 66 during Nero's pompous coronation of Tiridates, Vinicianus decided to act, in all likelihood without any connivance from his powerful father-in-law. Although the so-called *coniuratio* (conspiracy) *Vinicianiana* was a minor affair by comparison with the better known *coniuratio Pisoniana* of the previous year, its fallout was far more significant. From this moment on, Nero systematically recalled or indicted his most important and most noble senatorial *legati Augusti pro praetore*. One by one they were replaced, either by capable but socially less distinguished and therefore less dangerous new men or by elderly and rather passive senators. The noble Rufus and Proculus Sulpicius Scribonius, commanders of the armies of Germania Inferior and Superior respectively, were summoned to Greece where they had to commit suicide, and were replaced by Fonteius Capito and the able *novus homo* Verginius Rufus. The illustrious Ti. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus was dishonorably recalled from Moesia in about 67 and replaced by Pomponius Pius. Probably around October 66, Corbulo, at that time still in command of a sizeable army of three legions in Cappadocia (*III Gallica*, *v Macedonica* and *xv Apollinaris*), was also summoned to Greece *specie honoris* where he was subsequently forced to commit suicide some time early in 67. The major commands in the Roman East, Syria and the war in Judea, instead went to Mucianus and Vespasian, both men of proven experience (Vervaeke 2002, 162–81 and 2003, 441–2; Murison suggests this happened at the turn of 66/67: see CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 2). As Suetonius reports, Vespasian got the Jewish command “both as a man of tried energy and as one in no wise to be feared because of the obscurity of his family and name” (*Vesp.* 4.5–6). In addition, just as Nero and his counselors had always been careful to ensure they did not entrust Syria to men friendly with Corbulo during his Armenian campaigns (C. Ummidius Durmius Quadratus, L. Caesennius Paetus, then C. Cestius Gallus), the powerful Syrian command was given to the ambitious and adept C. Licinius Mucianus (*suff.* 64), reportedly Vespasian's opposite in many respects (Tac. *Hist.* 2.5). Just as Corbulo had been assigned his own son-in-law as one of his *legati legionis*, Titus was put in charge of *xv Apollinaris*, which at that point had stopped in Alexandria on its way back to Pannonia. At some point in the spring of 67, while still in attendance on Nero, Vespasian sent Titus ahead to Alexandria to collect this legion and lead it north. Vespasian subsequently crossed the Hellespont and took the land route to Syria, probably summoning *III Gallica* and *v Macedonica* en route from Cappadocia (Joseph. *BJ* 3.8; see Vervaeke 2000b, 294–8 and 2003, 441–2). In order to suppress the dangerous revolt in Judea, Vespasian was put in charge of a huge army of over 50 000 men, with *v Macedonica*, *x Fretensis* and *xv Apollinaris* as its crack force (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.6; see Levick 1999, 30–31; Jones 2000, 37). His other *legati legionis* were M. Ulpius Traianus for *x Fretensis* and Sex. Vettulenus Cerealis for *v Macedonica*. In Syria, Mucianus took command of *III Gallica*, *IV Scythica*, *VI*

Ferrata and *xii Fulminata*. Vespasian was reportedly quick to gain a reputation in the region, restoring discipline amongst the troops and conducting himself with such daring in battle as to sustain a wound to his knee (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.6).

5 The downfall of Nero and the resurgence of civil war

At the end of 67, Nero received an urgent call from Helius, the freedman he had put in charge of domestic affairs, urging him to quit Greece and return to Rome. Two factors contributed to the emperor's swift downfall, and with it the demise of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. On the one hand, there was increasing discontent among provincial taxpayers who had to foot the bill of Nero's ambitious and extravagant foreign and domestic policies. The elaborate and costly coronation of the Arsacid prince Tiridates in Rome in 66 was the culmination of nine years of intensive and large-scale military operations in Armenia (54/55–63/64). The great fire of Rome (64) and the ensuing reconstruction effort, the building of the *Domus Aurea*, as well as revolts in Britain (60/61) and now Judea, had further strained imperial resources. On the other hand, the fate of noble and distinguished commanders like the Sulpicii brothers and, especially, Domitius Corbulo, inevitably caused their counterparts to fear for their own safety. Foremost amongst the senior provincial commanders who no longer felt secure was Servius Sulpicius Galba (*ord.* 33), who had been governing Hispania Tarraconensis for several years. There are strong indications that well before the "official" rebellion of Julius Vindex in March or April 68, Galba had entered into treasonous contact with other provincial commanders, including Vindex, M. Salvius Otho, imperial legate of neighboring Lusitania, and possibly even Ti. Julius Alexander in distant Alexandria. The latter declared his support for Galba as early as July 6, 68, as soon as the news of Nero's death on June 9 had reached Egypt (Vervaeke 2002, 176–81). Although the legions of Germania Superior under Verginius Rufus had crushed Vindex's forces within weeks, and Galba only disposed of two legions (*vi Victrix* and the freshly levied *vii Galbiana*) and some auxiliary troops of questionable loyalty, Nero's failure vigorously to confront the crisis eventually led to his abandonment by the praetorian guard and then the senate in Rome. Galba, despairing since the defeat of Vindex, only regained his confidence and departed for Rome when word came in that Nero was dead and all had sworn allegiance to him. His advanced age notwithstanding, Galba started in a strong position as the wealthy scion of the old republican nobility, with ample military and administrative experience as well as a formidable network. After Nero's death, however, he wasted no time in making himself increasingly unpopular, his flawed and vengeful policies made worse by bad advisers, parsimony, and the principled but poor choice to adopt another austere descendant of the republican nobility, Lucius Calpurnius Piso Frugi Licinianus – who, moreover, lacked any administrative or military experience (Tac. *Hist.* 1.5–14).

On January 1, 69 the legions of Germania Superior refused to renew their oath of allegiance to Galba. The next day the army of Germania Inferior boldly saluted their commander, A. Vitellius, as emperor, with Germania Superior following suit on January 3 (Tac. *Hist.* 1.55–57). Ironically, Vitellius had been appointed to this key position late in 68 by Galba himself. Vitellius, now in command of seven legions and considerable auxiliary forces, soon received the support of provincial commanders in Gallia Belgica

and Lugdunensis, Britain, with *II Augusta*, *V Hispana* and *XX Valeria*, Raetia and Pannonia, with *X* and *XIII Geminae* (Tac. *Hist.* 1.59–61). Meanwhile in Rome, Salvius Otho, frustrated in his ambition to become Galba's adoptive heir, staged a successful coup with the equally disgruntled praetorians on January 15 (Tac. *Hist.* 1.27). Both Galba and Piso, his hapless Caesar, were lynched in the Forum and the senate had little choice but to recognize Otho. This did not deter Fabius Valens and A. Caecina Alienus, two of Vitellius' *legati legionis*, who continued their march on Rome with more than a third of the Rhine army in two separate columns; Vitellius was to follow later with additional forces. Instead of waiting for the arrival of reinforcements from the powerful Danubian armies, Otho gave battle to the by now united forces of Valens and Caecina at Bedriacum and suffered a serious defeat. Three days after Otho had killed himself on April 16 the troops and senate in Rome recognized Vitellius as their new emperor (see Murison 1993, 81–119 and 131–42).

When news of Nero's death and Galba's accession had reached Judea, Vespasian had suspended his projected campaign against Jerusalem and, probably in the late autumn, sent Titus and Agrippa II to congratulate Galba and receive instructions (Tac. *Hist.* 2.1; cf. 1.10). Titus may have also intended to sound out Galba regarding his removal of Sabinus from the office of urban prefect, as well as his cancellation of a promised consulship for Sabinus' son (Nicols 1978, 60–1 and 157–8). While in Corinth, perhaps early in February, Titus learned of Galba's death, Otho's putsch and Vitellius' usurpation, and he anxiously consulted with his retinue. As Tacitus recounts with his discerning eye for historic moments, Titus faced a stark choice between two very different options. If he were to complete his journey to Rome, he would win no gratitude for an act of courtesy intended for another emperor, and risked becoming the hostage of either contender. If he returned, though, the victor would be offended. Nonetheless, as Tacitus explains, the second choice admitted prospects for further maneuvering: if Vespasian joined the victor's party while victory was still uncertain, Titus would be excused; should his father, however, assume the imperial purple, his rivals would be concerned with war and forget offences. After intense deliberation, Titus took the fateful decision to make his way back to Judea. Significantly, he chose to return via Rhodes and Cyprus, where he consulted the oracle of the Paphian Venus, receiving favorable replies on all accounts, and then "struck out boldly for Syria" on the way to his father (Suet. *Tit.* 5.1; cf. Tac. *Hist.* 2.1–4). Five months later, on July 1, 69 at Alexandria, more than 500 km from Vespasian's headquarters in Caesarea, Ti. Julius Alexander was the first to proclaim Vespasian emperor. By the end of December of that same year, Vitellius was dead and Rome firmly in the hands of Flavian forces. The next section of this chapter addresses two questions arising from these developments: who was really behind Vespasian's decision to make a dangerous bid for the throne, and how precisely can we explain his remarkable success?

6 Titus and Mucianus: the heir and the kingmaker

Despite being given command of a large army in 67, Vespasian was by no means in pole position to make a safe and successful bid for the imperial throne when Nero was ousted in the spring of 68. To begin with, he was a new man of relatively modest financial means, eclipsed in prestige and wealth by his own brother. "All agree," Tacitus tells us,

“that up to the time that Vespasian became emperor the reputation of the [Flavian] house depended on Sabinus” (*Hist.* 3.75). In addition, Nero and his advisors had made sure to entrust the powerful Syrian command to C. Licinius Mucianus (*suff.* 64), no friend of Vespasian. Even after the transfer of *legio v Gallica* to Moesia around the time of Nero’s downfall (Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3 and Tac. *Hist.* 2.74 – *contra Hist.* 2.4 and 2.6), Mucianus still controlled as many legions as Vespasian: *IV Scythica*, *VI Ferrata* and *XII Fulminata*, as well as the sizeable resources of Syria’s dependent principalities. Last but not least, Vespasian’s lack of imperial ambition and his initial hesitation are amply recorded. Indeed, even as emperor, Vespasian seems to have drawn little satisfaction from the glory of his office. Suetonius reports that he found the slow procession of his and Titus’ Judean triumph in 71 tiresome, remarking ruefully that “it serves me right for being such a fool as to want a triumph in my old age, as if it were due to my ancestors or had even been among my own ambitions” (*Vesp.* 12).

It comes as no surprise, then, that Vespasian initially shrank from the risky and irreversible decision to challenge for the throne. While the struggle between Vitellius and Otho was still undecided, Vespasian made no move, despite the urging of his supporters. He did not take the fateful step until, as Suetonius reports, “he was roused to it by the accidental support of men unknown to him and at a distance” (Suet. *Vesp.* 6.1). Suetonius then paints a muddled picture of a chain of events that almost haphazardly led to Vespasian’s proclamation (6.2–4). According to this account, Vespasian was first proclaimed emperor in Aquileia by a force of 6000 soldiers detached from the three Moesian legions and sent to support Otho’s war effort. They allegedly made this bold move after they had learned of Otho’s defeat and at the instigation of the men from *III Gallica*. Although they temporarily returned to their former allegiance (to Vitellius), Ti. Julius Alexander in Egypt had his troops take the oath for Vespasian on July 1 as soon as he learned of their actions. The army in Judea then followed suit on July 11 (July 3 according to Tac. *Hist.* 2.79), with the support of Mucianus providing further impetus to the enterprise.

There is, however, every indication that, in reality, things were a little less accidental. Since the evidence invariably suggests that Vespasian was not the prime mover behind his own proclamation, we have to look for those who stood to benefit the most from this massive gamble. First and foremost, Titus comes to mind as the prime beneficiary of a successful outcome, the heir apparent. Unlike his father, Titus was the talented, highly ambitious and self-conscious product of the imperial court and already played a leading role in the suppression of the Jewish revolt before Nero’s downfall (Suet. *Tit.* 2–4; Levick 1999, 32–5). His decision not to travel to Rome after receiving news of Galba’s death, Otho’s putsch and Vitellius’ usurpation was quite discourteous, especially as Otho had promptly reinstated Flavius Sabinus as urban prefect (Plut. *Otho* 5.2; Levick 1999, 44). It was also particularly risky, since Otho at that time still had a good chance of winning the war with the help of the powerful Danubian legions. There is also significant circumstantial evidence as to his intentions: he called at Rhodes (where he may have talked to the proconsul of Asia, C. Fonteius Agrippa, soon to be put in charge of Moesia by Vespasian: Levick 1999, 45) and certainly visited the oracle of Paphian Aphrodite on Cyprus (as discussed earlier in this chapter). Although the troops in Syria and Judea had already recognized Otho before Titus’ arrival in Caesarea, Tacitus states that the leading commanders in the East started to prepare for war while Vitellius and Otho were still fighting it out and that Vespasian and Mucianus reached their decisive agreement to act

in concert and postpone the war until a more favorable opportunity long after others had already come to an agreement (Tac. *Hist.* 2.6–7). In this respect, it is also very important to acknowledge that, after both men had begun to communicate through friends “at the time of Nero’s death,” it was Titus who skillfully convinced Mucianus to abandon his hostility towards Vespasian and throw in his lot with the Flavians, knowing very well that the support of the aspiring legate of Syria was a condition *sine qua non*. As soon as Titus had won over Mucianus, both men started to work the military tribunes and centurions as well as the rank and file (Tac. *Hist.* 2.5 and 74, cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 4; Levick 1999, 45). In light of these considerations, the historic decision to make a Flavian bid for empire after Galba’s demise was probably first made by Titus (for this view, see also the pertinent comments in Nicols 1978, 94 and Levick, 1999, 45). At any rate, it was Titus who reaped the most handsome rewards after victory, especially so from the moment he was back in Rome (Suet. *Tit.* 6). In the run-up to the open insurrection, however, the Flavians carefully concealed their preparations, keeping up a semblance of normality (Tac. *Hist.* 2.98), no small feat given the logistic complexities caused by the tyranny of distance (cf. *Hist.* 1.9). The troops in the East had recognized Vitellius by, perhaps, mid-May 69 (*Hist.* 2.73–4) while operations against the Jewish rebels resumed as a blind as soon as Vespasian knew of Vitellius’ accession (Levick 1999, 38–9).

It follows from the above that, after Vespasian and Titus, Mucianus could expect to benefit the most from a successful Flavian bid for supremacy, if only because such could not be achieved without his support. Once he had made up his mind, Mucianus, a sharp operator who easily equaled Titus in terms of talent and ambition (Tac. *Hist.* 1.10; 2.5 and 80), played a decisive role in effecting and directing a concerted, vigorous and successful Flavian campaign (Tac. *Hist.* 3.66; see Vervaeke 2003, 460–2; de Kleijn, 2009).

It was Mucianus who persuaded Vespasian to cast aside his qualms and reservations about taking on Vitellius and subsequently assumed the actual leadership in the civil war (Cass. Dio 64.8.4). At an undisclosed location (Mount Carmel?), before the official proclamation of Vespasian at Alexandria, Mucianus had a long private conversation with Vespasian, and then openly harangued the other (legionary) legates and friends in attendance. Mucianus insisted that Vespasian’s *novitas* no longer posed a real hindrance, that Vespasian should be mindful of the fate of Corbulo, whose stubborn loyalty to Nero cost him his life, that he could count on all the men and resources in Syria, Judea and Egypt, and that he enjoyed the advantage of being a *senex triumphalis* with two sons, the oldest already *capax imperii*. Mucianus’ words reportedly had their effect, and after the overall strategy for the war had been decided, Mucianus returned to Antioch, Vespasian to Caesarea (Tac. *Hist.* 2.74–78; cf. *Hist.* 1.52.4). All being now decided and in place, the troops in Alexandria saluted Vespasian Imperator on July 1, 69 followed by the army in Judea on July 3, and, finally but enthusiastically, on July 11, all of Syria’s legionary and auxiliary forces. All the other eastern provinces up to and including Achaëa then joined in (Tac. *Hist.* 2.79–81; Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3). These momentous steps taken, the war strategy was officially confirmed at a grand conference at Berytus at which Mucianus was present with all his legates and tribunes as well as his most distinguished centurions and soldiers. Titus was to finish the war in Judea, Vespasian to go to Alexandria in order to capitalize on Egypt’s vast resources (especially money and grain), while Mucianus himself would lead an elite force westward with the obvious intent to enlist the formidable Danubian armies en route – *III Gallica* in Moesia and, perhaps, even the praetorian cohorts, were

already firmly aboard. In addition, letters were sent to all the armies and their commanders, directing them to win over the disgruntled praetorians (Tac. *Hist.* 2.81–2; Cass. Dio 64.9.2; see also Tac. *Hist.* 2.74 for *III Gallica*'s early adherence and 2.82 for preliminary overtures to the praetorians). Last but not least, it was Mucianus who generously contributed to and directed the unpopular though critical effort of raising funds for the war amongst those wealthy elites at hand (Tac. *Hist.* 2.84).

Mucianus brought more to the table than just his key position as commander of the Syrian army and his rhetorical, organizational and leadership skills. In all probability, he had served in the ranks of Corbulo around 60, possibly as legate of *VI Ferrata*. As such he was now the senior consular representative of the vast and diverse group of senatorial and equestrian officers and centurions who had lost a formidable patron in Nero's famed general and now all faced an uncertain future, especially as Vitellius tended to reward only his victorious Rhine legions (see, e.g., Tac. *Hist.* 2.60 for Vitellius alienating the Illyrian/Danubian legions). With Titus' backing, Mucianus may have played a critical role in winning over the active or passive support of some of Corbulo's ranking officers and centurions (Vervaeke 2003, building on earlier work by Syme and Nicols). First amongst these were Ti. Julius Alexander and Ti. Aurelius Fulvus. During Corbulo's final campaign in 63, the former was entrusted with diplomatic missions of the highest importance as senior adviser (*minister bello datus*), including negotiations with the Arsacid prince Tiridates. In 66, he was appointed to the key position of *praefectus Aegypti* and as such commanded legions *III Cyrenaica* and *XXII Deiotariana*, *vexillationes* of which had also served under Corbulo in 63/64. Well before the open rebellion of Vespasian against Vitellius, he (as well as Mucianus) had secretly allied himself with Vespasian (Tac. *Hist.* 2.74). He made history by having his troops take the oath of allegiance to Vespasian as the first commander in the East. July 1, 69 is the date Vespasian always kept to as *dies principatus* (Joseph. *BJ* 4.605–21; Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3). He subsequently became Titus' *praefectus castrorum* during the final stages of the Jewish War and in all likelihood held the office of *praefectus praetorio* with Titus Caesar. In 69, T. Aurelius Fulvus played a critical role in Moesia at the helm of *III Gallica*, a legion that he commanded since 64 and that, together with *VI Ferrata*, had served uninterruptedly under Corbulo for some 10 years (55 to 65: Vervaeke 2003, 437–42). There should be no doubt that he, his officers, centurions and legionaries incited the "Illyrian" (= Danubian) armies to join the Flavian cause as they, too, were already on board before there had been talk of open rebellion (see Tac. *Hist.* 2.74, 85.1 and 96.1; Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3). Possibly, Aurelius Fulvus and "his" *III Gallica* openly called for the other Danubian legions to side with the Flavians when Mucianus had reached the Bosphorus with *VI Ferrata* and his other troops. Another veteran from Corbulo's campaigns, M. Vettius Bolanus (*suff.* 66), who governed Britain and its strong garrison from 69 to 71, further contributed to the demise of Vitellius by a slow and half-hearted response to his request for more auxiliaries, eventually sending only some three cohorts plus a squadron of cavalry (Tac. *Hist.* 2.97 and 3.41).

In light of these considerations, Levick (1999, 53) is absolutely right to have characterized Mucianus as the "kingmaker" of the Flavian dynasty. As to Mucianus' own motives for placing his bets with the Flavians, de Kleijn (2009, 324) plausibly suggests that "he was of the opinion that the state would best be served by Titus as emperor and that the most secure way to achieve that was an interim emperorship for the elderly Vespasian." Quite unsurprisingly, Mucianus behaved more like an imperious partner in

empire than as a subordinate after Berytus, often treating Vespasian with scant respect (see, for example, Tac. *Hist.* 2.83; Suet. *Vesp.* 13; Cass. Dio 64.22.2). He was somewhat perfunctorily rewarded for his services, holding two more suffect consulships in 70 and 72, twice in immediate succession of Vespasian and with Titus Caesar as a colleague. Interestingly, he was denied the signal honor of a joint ordinary consulship with either Vespasian or Titus, unlike, for example, M. Vipsanius Agrippa under Augustus or L. Vitellius under Claudius (for further details of Mucianus' treatment by the Flavians see CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 4).

7 An historic usurpation, a centennial legacy

Much like the plan that had put Vitellius on the throne, Mucianus struck out to secure Italy while Vespasian was watching at safe distance in Alexandria. At the helm of an elite vanguard consisting of *vi Ferrata* and some 13 000 other legionaries and auxiliaries and in anticipation of large-scale defections amongst the Danubian forces, Mucianus' initial plan was to threaten southern Italy from Dyrrachium (Tac. *Hist.* 3.83, see also Syme 1977). Once the Flavian war machine had swung into action, however, events unfolded rather more quickly than planned. After the restless men of *III Gallica* won over Moesia, Pannonia and Dalmatia followed suit. Interestingly, and in sharp contrast to their subordinates and soldiers, the senatorial commanders in charge of these provinces took no lead in the civil war and simply remained passive bystanders. The key roles in Pannonia and Dalmatia were played by Antonius Primus, the energetic *legatus legionis VII* and the procurator Cornelius Fuscus (Tac. *Hist.* 2.85–6). In an amazing move that must have surprised friend and foe alike, these men seized the moment and brazenly hijacked Flavian grand strategy. Primus, aided by fellow maverick and Corbulo veteran Arrius Varus, boldly dashed ahead into Italy as a sort of vanguard to the vanguard, against Vespasian's express orders not to venture beyond Aquileia but to wait there for Mucianus, whilst Cornelius Fuscus managed to seize control of the fleet stationed at Ravenna. Significantly, it was the men of *III Gallica* that bore the brunt of Primus' personal Blitzkrieg (Tac. *Hist.* 3.24 and 29). Although this cavalier bravado eventually resulted in the decisive victory at Cremona, triggering the defections of Spain and Britain (Tac. *Hist.* 3.44), and led Primus and his men all the way to Rome (*Hist.* 3.2–35, 52, 60–61, 78–86), defeat could have put the entire Flavian endeavor in jeopardy. Regardless of their stunning successes, both Primus and Varus later faced the fatal wrath of Mucianus and Domitia Longina, Corbulo's daughter, conveniently espoused by Domitian Caesar in 70 (Tac. *Hist.* 3.49 and 4.68). As for Vespasian, he received the tidings of Cremona and Vitellius' subsequent death while in Alexandria. After the orchestration of a series of favorable omens there and elsewhere, he returned to Rome where he celebrated his famous Judean triumph and added no less than eight consulships to his role of honor (Suet. *Vesp.* 7–8).

After his truly remarkable rise to power, Vespasian embarked on a comprehensive program of reconstruction and consolidation. Amongst his policies aimed at realizing this structural stability, two are worthy of mention in the context of this chapter. First, he showed considerable moderation in rewarding his own partisans (Suet. *Vesp.* 8.2–3). Second, and more importantly, he fulfilled Caesar's and Claudius' vision of a new, truly imperial aristocracy, an historic and inspired decision beautifully summarized by

Suetonius: “he reformed the two great orders, reduced by a series of murders and sullied by longstanding neglect, and added to their numbers, holding a review of the senate and the equestrians, expelling those who least deserved the honor and enrolling the most distinguished of the Italians and the provincials” (*Vesp.* 9.2). That Domitia Longina stayed on as Augusta until her death around 128 (Fraser 2015) and that it was the former top brass of the Flavian military that forced Nerva in 97 to adopt M. Ulpius Traianus (Grainger 2003, 89–102), the homonymous son of Vespasian’s loyal *legatus legionis*, suggests that the assassination of Domitian was in a sense less a change of regime than a change of leader. The accession of Antoninus Pius in 138 is likewise suggestive, as he was the grandson of Aurelius Fulvus (*suff.* 70?, II *ord.*), yet another legionary legate who played a critical role in the accession of the Flavians. Nicols (1978, 99) is, therefore, justified in observing that “those men with him in the East [...] and their descendants, as result of their importance in 69, became the leading members of the ruling class and dominated the Roman imperial government, first as advisers, then as emperors, until the death of Commodus in 192.” From this point of view, the Flavians might be said to have established the Roman empire’s most enduring regime. An entirely new chapter can only be said to have begun in 193–196 with the equally remarkable succession of the Punic African Septimius Severus, the first emperor of (partly) non-Italic provincial descent.

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FURTHER READING

Just as Wiseman's study on new men in the Roman senate (1971) remains essential to a good understanding of the republican aristocratic oligarchy, Saller's epochal work (1982) on Roman patronage under the early Empire still stands as an indispensable study of this foundational Roman habit and its significance in terms of understanding social mobility in the Roman world. In addition to the relatively rich body of extant sources (esp. Tacitus and Suetonius), one should consult Nicols (1978), Levick (1999) and Vervaeke (2003) for extensive discussions of the Flavian bid for the imperial purple. Murison (1993) still offers an insightful narrative of the civil war from the revolt of Vindex to Vitellius' arrival in Rome; overall surveys of the fateful year 69 can be found in Wellesley (2000³) and Morgan (2006). Both Syme (1977) and de Kleijn (2009) provide excellent discussions of the important role of Licinius Mucianus. For a comprehensive study on Domitia Longina, Corbulo's daughter and Domitianus' spouse, see now Fraser (2015).

CHAPTER 3

The Emperor Vespasian

John Nicols

Et ambigua de Vespasiano fama solusque omnium ante se principum in melius mutatus est.

The reputation of Vespasian is contested and he alone of the whole series of emperors up to his time changed for the better.

Tac. *Hist* 3.50

There are an extraordinary number of memorable quips that relate to Vespasian; some from Vespasian himself and some from those who wrote about his reign. Forty years ago, when I first pondered the meaning of the Tacitean judgment at the beginning of this chapter, I was particularly struck by two components. Surely Tacitus would have agreed with Lord Acton that power corrupts, and the historian provided ample commentary of that corruption of power in his treatises. Given the corrupting nature of sole power, one might have deduced that Tacitus meant that Vespasian, like all other emperors, was corrupt, but in his case the real corruption, if that is what he meant by *fama ambigua ... ante*, was already behind him when he became emperor. In this sense, changing into a better person might mean little more than “not as bad as before.” Such a judgment is then hardly a compliment. The more plausible alternative is to conclude that Tacitus, however reluctantly, recognized that something unusual happened, namely that Vespasian, contrary to expectations given his early career and contrary to expectations that power corrupts, as emperor rose to the occasion and, despite holding close to absolute power, nonetheless succeeded in becoming as *princeps* a better person and a more than satisfactory ruler. The Tacitean comment that his reputation was “contested” is then thoroughly appropriate.

Contemporary historians and the ancients as well would have had problems with the first interpretation. All tend to agree that the early career of Vespasian might not have been as exemplary as that of his elder brother, Flavius Sabinus, or that of his friend and colleague, Plautius Silvanus Aelianus. All agree, however, that there is much to praise for his administration of the empire, for his personal probity, his respect for the best of Roman tradition and institutions, and his steady hand in restoring finances and stabilizing

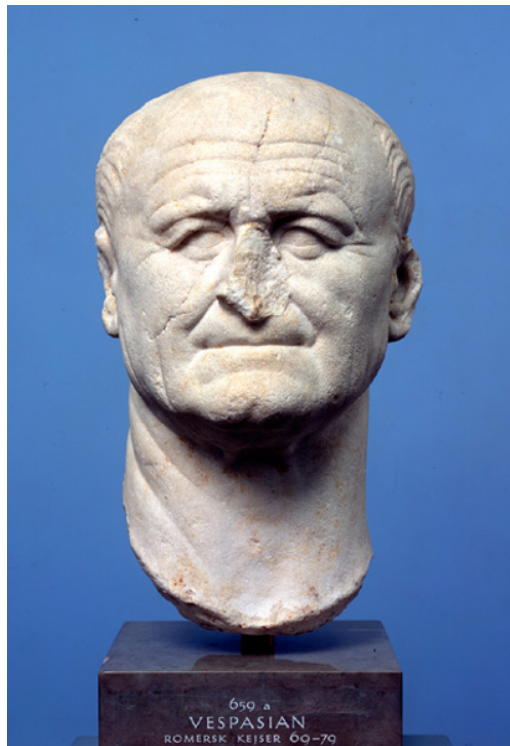


Fig. 3.1 Vespasian. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek inv. 2582. Reproduced by permission of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek

the army and the empire. Indeed one can make the case that that Vespasian and those who rose to power with him (the *partes Flavianae* (the Flavian party)) provided the empire, its citizens, and subjects with four generations of peace and prosperity. The conclusion that one must come to is that Tacitus, however reluctantly, also recognized that Vespasian's reign was a success and about as good as one might expect from a system that was at its core autocratic.

In assessing the principate of Vespasian we need a starting point. Officially and from the Flavian perception, the principate began on July 1, 69 when his troops saluted him as emperor. It was, however, only after another civil war and the Flavian occupation of Rome that the senate confirmed that choice in December of that year. The six-month discrepancy points, I believe, to one of the critical issues facing the new regime, namely, the geographical distribution of its power centers during the Year of the Four Emperors. Vespasian himself was in the East, in Judea and in Alexandria; his son, Titus, became the active commander for the Jewish War commanding a significant army in Judea; Mucianus left his Syrian legions and moved west through the Balkans regulating affairs in those provinces as he proceeded, but arriving too late to affect the outcome of the battle of Bedriacum or the struggle in Rome in the fall of that year. Other centers of Flavian support were of course to be found among the Danube legions (once supporters of Otho, and not reconciled to the victor of the first battle of Bedriacum, Vitellius) and beyond.

This distribution of power created uncertainties. Legionary commanders of the victorious Danube legions claimed to represent the Flavian party but their performance and reputations were/became more “dubious” than Vespasian’s. Senators, anxious about their complicity under Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius were hardly capable of providing an authentic voice for peace and stability. The praetorian guard, now doubled in size by Vitellius, also faced the demobilized but not disarmed cohorts who had been part of the Othonian plot against Galba; their collective and individual loyalty could not be counted on to defend the interests of the new *princeps* and his family. Moreover, during the period between the victory at Bedriacum in October and the Flavian occupation of Rome itself in December, the Vitellians remained in control of the city. How much authority could the brother (Flavius Sabinus) and the son (Domitian) of the new emperor exercise among the now demoralized and recalcitrant soldiers and senators in Rome? That their lives were in danger is confirmed by precipitous end of Sabinus, executed at the hands of the Vitellian soldiers while negotiating a peaceful transition and settlement.

The “short-term” problems did not disappear with the Flavian occupation of Rome. The Vitellian legions, though defeated, had not been reconciled, and to judge by their readiness to nominate and/or support other candidates for imperial office, they might yet find and promote another rival, and engage in yet another civil war. The distributed nature of Flavian power made this option very real. That Vespasian and his agents successfully navigated through these dangers speaks well not only for the new emperor’s acumen, but testifies even more to the quality of the individuals who were active in his party from the beginning and continued to play meaningful roles in the administration of the empire for years to come. It is indeed the central thesis of this contribution that the success of the Flavians owed much to the personal qualities of Vespasian. As Tacitus says on a related issue (see later in this chapter), the emperor set the example for others to follow. More important in the long run, and to some extent underestimated in scholarly literature, is the following: Vespasian succeeded in large part because he was able to recognize competency in his followers and to reward them with more responsibility.

It is however important to recognize in advance that, despite the dangers of their position at the end of the year 69, and the uncertainties they faced at the beginning of the 70s, the Flavians enjoyed some notable advantages as they planned for their restoration of the state. Admittedly, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius had variously squandered resources, had alienated the administrative elite, and had effectively undermined military discipline and coherence. Nonetheless, the now 90 years of virtual peace from the battle of Actium until the Year of the Four Emperors had been marked by considerable prosperity, and a prosperity that was increasingly part of the urban experience throughout the empire. The overwhelming number of those cities in Italy and in the provinces had not been directly affected by the turmoil of the year. Moreover, the disruptions of the two battles in the Po Valley in 69, violence in Cremona and Rome in the late fall and early winter, and the outbreaks of unrest in Campania, and among the troops elsewhere in Italy and the northern provinces though serious, and in some cases like Cremona, devastating, were not of such a character as to threaten the prosperity of the great majority of cities of Italy with fiscal and political chaos *provided* that peace and stability could be restored quickly and effectively.

In what follows in this chapter, we review first the Flavian solutions to these problems in the short-term and then turn to the longer-range policies that evolved out of those

experiences. The transition between these components was, as will be shown, consistent and effective; the positive outcome reflects well on the ability of Vespasian and his supporters to manage the crisis in the short run and then to set parameters for peace and prosperity to come.

1 The immediate concerns of the Flavians (July 69–December 70)

Two issues appear to dominate discussion in the new regime as reported especially by Tacitus and Suetonius. How to generate authority for the new ruler and his dynasty? And, second, how to ensure order and fiscal stability in the cities and among the subjects of the empire? In particular, the concerns in the first category might be organized under these headings: How was Vespasian to gain authority a) with the soldiers, with officer corps, with the praetorian guard; b) with potentates, cities, and provinces of empire; c) with the senate and with the intellectual and governing elites?

1.1 The armies

The legions of the Danube and of the Rhine had twice fought one another, and Vitellius' tour of the battlefield revealed considerable bloodshed during the first battle. Moreover, there were civilian casualties in Cremona. Though there are a few indications that the Danube legions, victors in the second battle, revenged themselves with excessive reprisals, the camaraderie of the military units, long encouraged by the rotation of officers, must have been undermined by further divisions between officers and the lower ranks and between legionaries and auxiliaries. Tacitus provides some evidence of how the various units responded to the news of the battles and the burning of the Capitoline temple. That the Batavian cohorts were ready to use the opportunity to confront the legionaries with their demands confirms what Tacitus acknowledges about underlying tensions. The immediate concern then was to reestablish discipline in the various armies (legions, auxiliaries, and praetorians) and especially to reconcile those units that had actually fought with one another. Here the members of the Flavian party, led by Mucianus in Rome, acted decisively and quickly in isolating those legates who had been prominent in the conflicts and in following up by dispatching Petillius Cerialis, the son-in-law of Vespasian, north to manage the Rhine armies. Whatever his failures in Italy in December and the temporary setbacks in Germany, Cerialis did succeed in restoring order within the Roman army and stabilizing relations on the Rhine and Moselle. Tacitus seems to recognize that achievement, for he gives Cerialis an important speech before the citizens of Trier on the benefits of the Roman dominion: peace, inclusion, and social mobility are stressed (*Hist.* 4.73–4). While these virtues may not have been in Cerialis' mind when dealing with the disaffected legionaries, they do reveal a disposition to promote reconciliation. There is not much indication that Cerialis and his associates feared for their lives in this situation. In sum, the personal qualities of the Flavian leaders, the officer class that must have formed the basis of the Flavian party, appears to be decisive in establishing order on the Rhine frontier. Most importantly the Flavians

avoided the kind of provocations that had alienated the defeated legionaries after the first battle of Bedriacum, namely they did not execute the leading centurion who had opposed them. Higher pay and status were indeed offered to some including the newly formed *Legio II Adiutrix*, but on the whole the Flavians appear, to judge by their treatment of the praetorians (see later in this chapter), to have chosen slow and thoughtful reorganization as the basis for reconciliation. Levick (1999, 107–16) pointedly notes the balance of hope and fear among the legionaries. The stability that followed suggests that the policy of reconciliation was successful.

The situation with the praetorians and with those legionaries of Vitellius in Rome was much more delicate. The cohorts serving under Nero had been involved in the assassination of Galba, had fought for Otho, and been dismissed (but not disarmed) by Vitellius. The latter understandably wanted to reward his own soldiers with appointments. The result was a dangerous mix of demoralized and resentful armed men with much to lose should the new *princeps* opt to reward his own followers with the prized appointments and dismiss those who had supported Otho. But who of the older praetorians could be trusted? Those who had murdered Galba and Piso, and then supported Otho, had revealed they might not be ready to support another tough-minded army veteran like Vespasian, and, moreover, what of the Vitellian appointments? The Flavian solution was not to dismiss whole blocks of praetorians but rather initially to keep them under control and then over time to reduce the number by securing the resignation and/or retirement and/or reassignment of those deemed unsuitable. In the interim, the praetorian prefecture was to be held by those close to the regime, that is, by members of the Flavian extended family. To judge by the results, the leaders of the Flavian party were remarkably successful in defusing this dangerous situation and deserve more credit than they are typically given for their careful management.

Related to the problem posed by the praetorians, was the status of Antonius Primus, the legionary commander who had won the second battle of Bedriacum for the Flavians. Here Mucianus effectively isolated Primus and drove him to seek refuge with Vespasian himself. The highly delicate political process reveals subtlety and sagacity: appointments were found for his allies in distant provinces and his legion was sent elsewhere. Few members of the elite would have had cause to regret Primus' removal from power.

Tacitus' narrative also exposes the conflicts between the officers and the rank and file. In more peaceful times, the centurions appear to have played a key role in managing these relationships, but in civil war the centurions were often the first victims of the internal dissension. The conflicts were not, however, limited to soldiers, but could also involve their civilian friends and contractors. Levick's (1999, 107–23) review of the tensions on the Roman frontier reveals problems of varied seriousness everywhere: once Rome appeared to be vulnerable, and the burning of the Capitoline temple was a powerful and ominous symbol of that vulnerability, opportunists arose to claim ancestral freedoms. Cerialis' speech to the Treveri (mentioned above) reveals not only the argument for staying in the empire, but also the kinds of issues that would have appealed to provincials contemplating secession: the high level of taxation, lack of integration and social mobility, and a "cruel" peace (Tac. *Hist.* 4.73–4).

What is truly impressive here is that the Flavians were remarkably successful at restoring discipline among the soldiers, retaining and/or winning back the allegiance of

subjects, communities, and potentates. And all of these successes were achieved in a very short time. Certainly Vespasian deserves much credit, but given the distances involved and his location in the East throughout 69, much of the credit also has to go to the members of the Flavian party, to Mucianus of course, but also to a host of other associates who acted on their own initiative and with minimal guidance from Vespasian himself. The men involved, and the list is long, may not have been charismatic leaders, and many like Tampius Flavianus and Petillius Cerialis clearly had “flaws,” but on the whole they, like Vespasian himself, proved themselves to have had a clear understanding of how the empire worked, and were successful at managing the crises. To judge by his actions, for it is nowhere so explicitly recorded, Vespasian understood and valued their performance and rewarded (in his restrained way) those achievements.

1.2 *Cities, potentates, provinces*

For the most part, the cities, both citizen and non-citizen, followed the practice well established during the civil wars of the late republic, namely they made positive overtures to those nearest and most threatening, but kept their options open. It is important to note, and again the situation in the late Republic provides a good reminder, that “community” sentiment might be more accurately described as the readiness of all or a good number of the members of the local elites to work with the competing parties.

Wherever the various armies traveled as they moved from their encampment on the frontier to Italy and eventually on to Rome, they left in their wake a warning of what could happen if the new regime could not restore discipline. A few long-established and prosperous cities like Cremona were destroyed utterly by out-of-control legionaries. Communities along marching routes followed by the opposing forces had to provide lodging, food, and fodder, and in the process the *iura hospitii* (rights of privileges of guest friendship) of more peaceful periods might be, indeed were abused (Tac. *Hist* 3.41). The root of the problem was of course the breakdown in discipline that occurs when civil war breaks out and commanders compete for the support of those who are going to fight and die on their behalf. Abuses that might be punished in peacetime were ignored; tensions between soldiers and civilians could no longer be managed. It may not have been the kind of class warfare that Rostovtzeff (1957) wants to recognize, as Levick (1999, 153) rightly argues, but the tension does reflect the delicate balances that had to be struck between categories of enlisted men, and between the legionaries and the urban centers of the empire. And, indeed, some of the commanders, though energetic in their own right, indulged themselves and allowed their soldiers more latitude than might have been accepted in peaceful times. Moreover, other issues, for example the relations between auxiliaries and legionaries, that might have been managed successfully earlier, now became open conflicts. The classic case of the latter is of course the conflict between the Batavian Cohorts and the legionaries. Differences in compensation, recruiting practices, and status became manifest as the various parties maneuvered between the rival groups. The open warfare between the contenders also served to pull troops away from the critical frontiers and to allow tribal and clan dissidents the opportunity to claim more independence from Rome. Such trends can be observed on all the frontiers, from Britain to the Black Sea, and from Saharan Africa to the shores of the North Sea.

The Batavian Revolt is the classic example of this phenomenon, but examples can be found all along the Roman frontier.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that from the very beginning of his principate Vespasian had also engaged local princes and potentates as supporters and agents of his policies. Julius Agrippa and Antiochus IV (Commagene) are among the better known, but there were others also in the West among them Romanized Gauls, Julius Civilis and Julius Classicus, who saw advantage in at least pretending to support the Flavian cause.

And indeed for much of the autumn the Vitellian leadership was ready to tolerate Flavius Sabinus, the brother of the now proclaimed rival, as the city prefect and continued even after the decisive second battle to negotiate with him. It was in the end the soldiers themselves who perceived what they stood to lose with a Flavian victory. Unconstrained by Vitellius himself and the leading members of his party, they acted in an increasingly independent way. Details on the process by which discipline was re-established are spare, but it is readily apparent that the Flavian leaders sought to avoid confrontation, preferring instead to buy time by relocating and reorganizing those units whose disposition to violence posed imminent threats.

In sum, and to judge by their actions during and immediately after the turmoil of 69, the Flavians were determined to secure the prosperity of the cities of the empire. They were also ready to work with the client kings and princes insofar as it was useful to achieve policy goals on the frontier of the empire. In this system, the former, the cities, were decidedly more important than the latter.

1.3 *Coping with the elites*

The Flavian family did not belong to the older republican aristocracy, almost none of whom survived in any position of prominence. In that sense, Vespasian's direct competition involved men much like himself, that is, men from families that had risen to some prominence under the Julio-Claudian emperors. In different ways, Galba, *capax imperii* (capable of governance), and Vitellius were more distinguished, the former for his ancestors and for his long and impressive administrative record, the latter for the prominence of his father who was a close adviser and colleague to Claudius. But, by the time Vespasian made his claim to empire, Galba and his assassin, Otho, were both dead. Furthermore, and despite Galba's remarks on the qualities of the young and very well-born aristocrat Piso when the former adopted the latter, the old aristocracy was no longer relevant to the events of the year 69.

The Roman elite that confronted the crisis consisted of a variety of groups, among them senators and equestrians who operated at the imperial level, and also a significantly larger number of provincials and municipal leaders from many communities throughout Italy and the provinces. In rank they were equestrian and decurial (member of the local senate); many had served in the Roman legions and in municipal, provincial and/or imperial government. The structure of social relations, relying heavily on notions of *hospitium*, *amicitia*, *necessitas* (obligations incurred through the practice of hospitality and personal friendship) ensured that that there was a reasonably high level of cultural coherence among the various groups. Most members of the elite, Roman and municipal, were for example

familiar with the basic texts of Greeks and Latin literature and probably understood the leading ideas of the various philosophical schools. Pliny the Younger's letters provide a vivid illustration of the role of literature among at least some of the senators sent as staff officers to the frontier. Tacitus' narrative of events for 69 can leave scant doubt about how little power and influence these groups could have on events. The secret of empire, the *arcanum imperii* (namely that only the soldiers counted in making a new emperor), was well understood and the elites for the most part removed themselves from imminent danger. Though powerless as a group to affect the outcome, their cooperation with the new regime was absolutely essential if the stability of the empire was to be restored. It was indeed this group that provided the senior civil servants who managed the empire and imperial property. Their values and energy were encouraged and supported equally by Augustus, by Vespasian and later by Trajan and his successors. Note that the families of the latter had risen to prominence under Vespasian.

Given the overwhelming strength of the Vitellian forces in Rome during the late spring until the end of the fall of 69, and recognizing the role of the soldiers in determining the fate of Galba and his chosen successor, there was every reason for individual senators and the senate itself to avoid taking any initiative that would negatively affect their status or property. Hence, the senate continued to pass decrees that provided the appearance of legitimacy, and, to judge by the form of the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, powers, privileges and exemptions that had under Augustus and Tiberius been awarded separately, now became part of an institutionalized package comprising imperial authority.

More specifically, leading senators did encourage Galba and later Vespasian to allow the return of Nero's exiles and pleaded for the prosecution of the *delatores* (informers) who had brought many of them low under Nero. Many of the exiles were restored, but *delatores*, like Tampus Flavianus, were not brought to the kind of justice that the some members of the "Stoic" Opposition envisioned. That is, Vespasian declined to prosecute. Moreover, if those *delatores* had redeeming qualities as administrators or as commanders, and again Tampus is a case in point, they were also given new honors and opportunities.

There is little evidence of any new vision of what the principate should be or how the Augustan model might be altered. Furthermore, there was no serious demand for the restoration of the kinds of powers the Senate and People had enjoyed in the late Republic. Admittedly, Tacitus does suggest that the adoption of the "best man" among the senators as heir apparent and consort in governance resonated with some and/or with many as a way to insure that the dangers (a new Caligula or Nero) might be avoided if indeed descent and family were confirmed as the primary properties associated with succession. Descent could not to be denied as method of selection, but it might perhaps be structured more effectively through adoption ... so much at any rate had been argued by Galba when he adopted Piso. Vespasian, with two sons, and one already experienced in war and peace, did not see any reason to take such a suggestion seriously.

Griffin (2000, 5–11) considers the case that there was disharmony between Vespasian and his agents in Rome, but one should not make too much of the changes in policy and personnel in these months. Time, distance, and uncertainty were surely factors, but on the whole the decisions involving individuals like Plautius Silvanus Aelianus (to govern a province or to become city prefect) or what kind of honors were appropriate for Galba might easily reflect the evolution of policy, rather any disharmony.

There is not much indication of how the governing classes in Spain and Greece, in Britain and in Crete viewed the various parties. Flavian agents and sympathizers were active in Germany and Britain; those who had benefited from Galba, Otho and/or Vitellius surely had anxieties that their newly acquired advantages might be at risk. For the most part, however, the Flavians engaged cautiously. The notable exception to this process was the decision to cancel the tax immunities that Nero had granted to cities of Greece. If there is an early policy to be identified it might best be characterized as one of caution and moderation. That is, the Flavians let it be known that they were not revolutionaries. Communities and their leaders could rest easily in the knowledge that the new regime did not intend to restore the state through any new expropriation of land or punitive tax surcharges. The cautious way the regime reclaimed Roman public land that had fallen into private hands is a good example of the restraint (see later in this chapter). So too, and in an important symbolic way, does the continuity of Roman silver coinage reflect this same program: silver content of coins was not restored to the pre-Neronian levels, but it was also not further reduced. The stress then was on continuity of accepted and acceptable practices, and this program surely appealed to elites everywhere. Moreover, any remaining anxieties might have been allayed further by reputations and regional backgrounds of the men that the Flavians adlected into the Roman senate as they consolidated their power (see section 2.7).

2 The evolution of the Flavian regime

Admittedly, it is somewhat artificial to separate the short- from the long-term concerns of the new Flavian regime. As noted earlier in this chapter, there is no evidence that would suggest that Vespasian was truly a revolutionary, someone bent on destroying the old and creating something radically new. The evidence is consistent that Vespasian and his party sought rather to preserve and to refine what was best that had been created by Augustus, nurtured and extended by Tiberius and Claudius. Two items make this point clear: the coin legend *Roma resurgens* (*BMCRE* II 87 no. 425 = *MW* 42); and the formula of the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* employed to legitimize Vespasian and the actions of his party: *uti licuit divo Aug(usto), Ti. Iulio Caesari Aug(usto), Ti. Claudio Caesari Aug(usto) Germanico* (“And that it shall be lawful for him ... just as it was lawful for the deified Augustus, for Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus, for Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus”; for the full text, see APPENDIX 4). That such a policy was deliberate and well understood by the members of the Flavian party finds confirmation in the remarkable continuity among the Roman ruling elite over the following century and a half. One may also suspect that the Flavian leaders also understood well that the success of the regime depended both on institutions and on the quality of the individuals who administered the state. Tacitus of course does not formulate the case as precisely as made here, but there is no question about the fact that he understood that the Flavian restoration was involved in the improvement in the moral climate and in the promotion of competent administrators (*Ann.* 3.55–6).

The questions we need to consider now are what specifically did the Flavians do to sustain discipline among the legionaries? To manage the praetorians? To facilitate stability

and prosperity of the cities of Italy and of the provinces? And finally, to win the cooperation of the ruling classes in Rome, in Italy, and in the provinces?

2.1 The praetorians

It is not possible to determine the degree to which discipline had declined under the lax leadership of Nero and his prefects Tigellinus and Nymphidius Sabinus. But Galba had demonstrated the dangers inherent in neglecting their complaints about service and benefits expected (Tac. *Hist.* 1.5). Otho took advantage of their discontent, and seized the empire for himself only to be defeated by Vitellius and the legions of the Rhine. Vitellius was ready to reward his legionaries by giving many of them appointments in the Praetorian Guard, and doing so without disarming those who had supported Otho. The result was that the number of “praetorians” may have risen to about 20 000 (twice the number under Nero), few of whom would have had much reason to support the new dynasty. The Flavians must have been concerned about this volatile mass of armed and dangerous men.

Though there is no suggestion in the sources that these two groups of praetorians, the Othonians and the Vitellians, might put aside their differences and make common cause against the Flavians, the potential for such an alliance must have constituted a challenge to the new regime. Three identifiable policies emerge early on. First, there were to be no massive discharges of whole blocks of praetorians. Second, the Flavians were determined to bring down the numbers to a more manageable and traditional figure. Third, at least some of their own men had to be introduced into the units. Scholars relying on discharge records have concluded that there must have been a review of individuals that resulted in discharges and reassignments. Here we cannot determine the details, and even the records of discharges are few. Nonetheless, by the mid 70s the number of cohorts was down to about 9 or 10 from 18 or more. Achieving this must have required considerable delicacy, for Vespasian was apparently determined not to provide this group, or any group, with unseemly gifts; “gifts of honor” yes, but not such that might be construed as bribes.

Mucianus, probably acting according to a generally agreed plan, proceeded cautiously in the early months of 70. It is important to bear in mind that the plan probably did not and could not anticipate all the variations that surely arose. Nonetheless, and to judge by the events, he must have convinced all parties that they need not fear retribution and that discharges would not be punitive or dishonorable. Though not specifically recorded, individuals may have received incentives to retire and to settle in Roman colonies. There is some epigraphical evidence that supports this conclusion.

We are better informed about the second element in the policy, namely that the praetorian prefect should be a member of the Flavian party and preferably also a member of the Vespasian’s immediate family (and not equestrian in rank). Arrecinus Clemens, whose now deceased sister had been married to Titus, assumed the role first. Not only was Clemens related to Vespasian, but also his father had been praetorian prefect under Caligula and he may well have enjoyed the confidence of at least some of the praetorians even if few had actually served under his father a generation earlier. Clemens was rewarded with a second consulate in 73 and the governorship of Tarraconensis. After Clemens,

Titus, newly arrived from the Judean War, assumed the office. That senators would hold the office of praetorian prefect and that both were members of the Flavian family demonstrates how important it was to the new regime to have in command men who were competent and loyal to the new government. Even so, one must recognize that the negotiations with the individual praetorians must have been long and difficult. That an effective praetorian cohort was re-created is apparent in the reign of Domitian when many served with distinction on the Danubian frontier. Though the details are not by any means clear, it is apparent that the Flavians party leaders were able to defuse a potentially very dangerous situation among the current and would-be praetorians. That they were able to do so in manner that did not lead to open and violent action suggests again that the Flavian leaders exercised considerable political skill. They were not as harsh as Galba who had refused the expected donative, but surely did provide sufficient incentives (land in provincial colonies may have been one option) to encourage individuals to retire from the cohorts. Mucianus, Clemens and Titus, all played central roles in re-establishing discipline and creating loyalty to the new regime.

2.2 *The legions*

The names of four legions disappear from the records and individuals were discharged from service, suggesting that the Flavians understood well that the conventional military values could not be restored in those units that had betrayed the empire. But that does not mean that all the “rank and file” in those legions could not find positions in the newly constituted legions that replaced them. Indeed, as the number of legions remains essentially the same, there must have been allowances made for individual legionaries to join other units. Moreover, given the mortalities of the three major battles (Bedriacum, Cremona, and Rome) there must have been incentives to reconcile, to reassign and to redeploy wherever and whenever possible. And indeed there is some evidence that this option was employed. It is important to bear in mind that the legionaries typically remained in one unit their whole career and therefore had a coherence that sometimes set them against their centurions and higher officers who tended to rotate through the legions. And, in times of trouble, it was often the centurions who were the focus of discontent.

Can one identify any policies at work here? Vespasian was famously not one to purchase the loyalty of his soldiers, and indeed had the reputation for being slow to pay expected benefits to his own soldiers. But whether the reality was so harsh may be doubted. The Flavians surely did not want to repeat the mistake that Galba had made. Hence, we need to look elsewhere for indications of how discipline and authority were restored. The evidence does indicate that a good number of legions moved to other areas on the Roman frontier; they also were given new and more permanent stone camps that may have eased the conditions of service. “Being under canvas” throughout the winter, as Corbulo had demanded of his troops, could not be a pleasant experience (Tac. *Ann* 13.35). So, too, did the Flavian policy of shortening the frontiers North, East, South and West (see section 2.3) effectively reduce the perimeter of the empire that had to be defended.

Recent scholarship has put to rest Rostovtzeff’s argument (1957) that the legionaries were becoming more “proletarian” in background and outlook, and more hostile to urban communities (and more disposed to sack cities like Cremona and to do so in a

style that would become more common 150 years later). New recruits in this scheme were drawn from the frontier areas and may not have shared the traditional values of the Flavian elite. But, as Levick (1999, 153) and others have shown, the decline in the percentage of Italian recruits was slow and was matched by an equally slow increase in the number of provincials, rising from a modest 2.5 to 5.0% in Spain, and from 19 to 25% in the East; surely a recognizable trend, but hardly a dramatic shift. Similar results may be seen among the recruitment of auxiliaries, though in this case the policy appears to have been to send the native recruits to areas far from their homeland.

Most importantly, and again to judge from the careers of many involved, the Flavians recognized talent and promoted accordingly. As a group, the centurions would have had little reason to support Vitellius after the execution of so many of their colleagues after the first battle of Bedriacum. To re-establish discipline meant that competent centurions and middle-ranking officers had to be identified. To judge by the stability and coherence in the legions over the succeeding three generations, this too must be reckoned as a notable success. The regularization of honors awarded may have contributed to the stability.

2.3 Borderlands

Given the patterns identified to this point it will not come as a surprise to see that Flavian policy on the borders of the Roman empire was characterized by a steady, though hardly dramatic, expansion of the frontier and a shortening of the lines to defend. Nonetheless, the accumulation of changes did indeed bring stability on the frontier and enhance security in the interior. The extension is most visible in Northwest Africa, in Britain where Cerialis and Frontinus were active, along the Rhine (where new camps were built and Roman control extended east across the Black Forest into the *Decumates Agri* of present-day Baden and Württemberg). Similar activity may be discerned in Syria where a new province was established (Cilicia), legions redeployed, and kingdoms to the north and east of Syria were realigned in such a way as to give Rome more direct control on the frontier. Infrastructure was also improved. Under the elder Trajan and in Syria, canals were dug, ports and roads improved, and as elsewhere forts significantly improved. In brief, the policy did not involve dramatic gestures, but rather a steady extension of Roman power: shortening the frontier where possible, constructing permanent (stone) fortifications, and seizing more direct control in key areas that had been managed by client princes. (See further CHAPTER 11, FRONTIERS, SECURITY, AND MILITARY POLICY).

The Flavians did not hesitate to advertise their successes. As Griffin notes, there were 20 imperial salutations and 14 of them date after 71 and the Judean War. There is no indication that they were undeserved, even if it is difficult to identify each.

2.4 The status of cities

As noted in section 2.2, some cities of Italy had suffered during turmoil of 69: Cremona, Rome itself and Campania had been directly affected by the warfare. Nonetheless, the overwhelming number of Italian communities had not suffered directly. In such cases the prospect of stability and peace was surely a decisive reason for all parties to engage

with and support the new government. Vespasian was, like Augustus, a builder and devoted considerable attention to the restoration of public buildings and temples in Rome, including on the Capitoline and in the districts that had been consumed by the Great Fire under Nero (see CHAPTER 8, REMAKING ROME). So, too, were the aqueducts of Rome repaired and extended (*aqua Claudia*). The infrastructure of Italy was not neglected. Assistance was given to cities to rebuild what had been lost in the conflicts and through neglect. Roads (*via Appia*, *via Latina*, *via Flaminia*) were repaired and extended, the new *via Flavia* in northeastern Italy built, and bridges were also built (on the *via Cassia*). These were not dramatic initiatives; rather they evolved incrementally and regularly over the decade of Vespasian's reign. Nonetheless, we may assume, the effect of the efforts on a cumulative basis did much not only to restore confidence in the regime but also to provide the basis for a prosperous civic life.

2.5 *Provinces and provincials*

Many of the improvements in the infrastructure of Italian cities can also be recognized in provincial cities. The expansion of the "epigraphic habit" provides much information about the details of these improvements and they are to be found throughout the empire: roads repaired and extended, canal systems developed, cities renewed. The instrument for these changes may be found in the quality of administrators the Flavians appointed to govern provinces and to administer the imperial patrimony. But it was not simply infrastructure. The development of a new office, the *legati iuridici* (imperial legates with judicial powers), indicates a commitment to supporting the extension of Roman law and went hand in hand with an overt program to promote integration and Romanization. Colonies were indeed established, and veterans settled in them, but more significantly a process of Romanization was employed by which provincials themselves were encouraged to adopt Roman civic institutions and the Latin language. Julius Agricola was not unique in promoting Roman civic institutions even in distant provinces like Britain (Tac. *Agr.* 21).

To judge by his actions, Vespasian wanted to be seen as a benefactor of the communities of the empire. Much of his official time must have been devoted to receiving petitions and legations from cities, and making allocations. The correspondence of Pliny the Younger to Trajan (collected in Book 10 of his *Letters*) provides a good indication of the range and frequency of the requests submitted. Not every request could be granted, but the emperor had every incentive to appear generous even in denying a request or asking the governor or local magnates to resolve the issue. Understandably, disappointed petitioners had no incentive to publicize their failure. Nonetheless the record of benefactions summarized nicely by Levick (1999, 140–3), does make it clear that Vespasian and his advisors sought to extend the Augustan model of urbanization.

Most notable in this process was the decision to expand citizenship by creating a system whereby non-citizen communities might advance to partial, and eventually to full, citizenship. As Griffin (2000, 32) notes, "Vespasian set in motion a system that would not only automatically convert a portion of the provincial élite into Roman citizens, but would also generate Latin *municipes* and *municipia* with constitutions similar to those obtaining in towns and colonies of Roman citizens". The evidence for this process, the bronze tablets discovered in Spain and called *leges municipales* are in fact

municipal charters around which non-citizen communities might constitute themselves. Such *leges* were already known from the late Republic and the bronze tablets have been found in both Italy and in Spain that date to the period. In this sense the Flavians extended access to citizenship as part of a process that dates back a century or more. The more the provincials “Romanized” themselves, both as communities and as individuals, the easier and more cost-effective it was to administer the provinces and secure the loyalty of former subjects now citizens. Again, the decision to extend municipal rights to Spanish communities does not represent a radical innovation; rather, it built on decisions that extend back to the Republic, were expanded by Caesar and Augustus, and carried further by Claudius in the latter’s decision to admit Gauls to the Roman senate. The extension of municipal rights to the communities of Spain may rightly be seen as the most important Flavian contribution to the process of Romanization of the West.

2.6 *Elites: senators, equestrians and decurions*

As the Flavians gained control of the empire they had to come to grips with the problem of governance. Institutions and procedures do matter, but much of the initiative rested with the actions of governors, provincial assemblies and the civic authorities. Tacitus makes the process abundantly clear in his oft-cited passage summarizing the policies of his father-in-law, Julius Agricola as governor of Britain. To “Romanize” and “civilize” the Britons:

Agricola gave private encouragement and public aid to the building of temples, courts of justice and dwelling houses, praising the energetic, and reproving the indolent. Thus an honorable rivalry took the place of compulsion. He likewise provided a liberal education for the sons of the chiefs, and showed such a preference for the natural powers of the Britons over the industry of the Gauls that they who lately disdained the tongue of Rome now coveted its eloquence. Hence, too, a liking sprang up for our style of dress, and the toga became fashionable.

Tac. *Agr.* 21

The point here is not necessarily how effective this strategy was in converting Britons into Romans but rather to illustrate that the personal leadership of the governor and of his staff was critical to the governing process.

The relationship between governors, legates, procurators, and the imperial chancellery had been evolving since the late Republic, given some direction under Augustus and Claudius and now was further rationalized under the Flavians and their successors through Hadrian. There was a senatorial *cursus honorum* (a flexible sequence of offices to be held at a minimum age), that allowed for the training of younger senators and for their advancement through the administrative ranks; so, too, can one find several tracks by which members of the equestrian order might also advance through the imperial service and even cross over into the senatorial order. It should be noted that these “tracks” were not rigid either for the senator or for the equestrian. As Levick (1999, 170) rightly notes, Vespasian used both ad hoc and systematic methods to replenish the ranks of both orders and to reward his followers. Certainly performance and loyalty to the regime mattered, but as the correspondence of the Younger Pliny and Fronto makes

clear, letters of recommendation and having the “right” mentors could make a decisive difference to the rate of advancement and the promotion to higher offices.

2.7 *Adlections and promotions*

The promotion of those who had supported the Flavian cause throughout the empire during 69 was secured in the traditional way, with honors and especially access to the emperor, both of which enhanced status and reputation. Others soon joined their ranks. The epigraphical and literary evidence is consistent that a significant number of men, many of them mature equestrians, were added to the lists of senators through the process of adlection. Admittedly it is not likely that the number of senators reached the range of 800 as quoted in some later sources (nor is it likely that the number of senators had fallen to 200 as has also been suggested). Tacitus notes that while Vespasian conferred senatorial rank as a reward on some of his partisans, he chose well (“outstanding men, and soon to attain the highest posts”, *Hist.* 2.82). So too, as Griffin (2000, 35) continues, grants of equestrian posts, procuratorships and prefectures, also went to competent men. It is difficult to draw conclusions beyond the fact that Vespasian’s actions suggest that he wanted to reward his party members, that he needed competent administrators, and that the number of acceptable senators was for various reasons “reduced.” Hence, many *adlecti* were provincials. Of the 30 known cases we find men not only from Italy, but also from Baetica and Narbonensis; two from Africa and more from the East. All were adlected to higher senatorial ranks both in 69 and in his censorship. Also, new patricians were created to serve the needs of the state cult.

Conclusions: “A well-ordered state has no need of great men ...”

So writes Syme (1939, 441) in assessing the “National Programme” of Augustus. Admittedly, Syme was trying to explain the demise of the Roman nobility and why it could not find a place in the new Augustan order. But the sentence may also be used to tell us something about Vespasian. Before 69, few in the Roman state might have thought of him as *capax imperii*, yet it is striking how quickly and even seamlessly he demonstrated just that quality. What made him *capax*? He was not charismatic, or even physically handsome. He clearly had a sense of humor about himself and his role in the process of renewal. His contemporaries in 69 accepted his leadership quickly, and perhaps in part because they understood where he was coming from and who his associates were. Some might have seen his brother Sabinus as the more gifted, but no surviving source questions his competence to lead. As noted, his virtues were then, and still are, recognized: personal probity, administrative prudence, and sagacity marked by his ability to identify and to promote competent administrators.

The Roman state was not well ordered in 69, and did apparently have need of a great man to redeem and restore. Vespasian himself may not have enjoyed the reputation for greatness in his earlier career, but his achievements not only brought peace and stability to the empire for years to come but also served to enhance his own reputation for becoming a better person. Few autocrats could make such a claim.

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FURTHER READING

Nicols (1978) remains a fundamental study of the structure of the Flavian "party" and its endurance. Levick (1999) is the best and most comprehensive biography of the emperor, and includes excellent analysis of the sources, literary and epigraphical. Griffin (2000) deals with Vespasian only in the first part, but the volume as a whole places the Flavian regime into the proper context. Pfeiffer (2009), written in German, covers in more detail much of the material in Griffin.

CHAPTER 4

The Emperor Titus

Charles Leslie Murison

Introduction

Titus Flavius Vespasianus the Younger (better known simply as Titus) is of great interest to historians of the Flavian period. The first Roman emperor to succeed his biological father, he was the best-trained for the position before Marcus Aurelius, enjoying as he did a period of almost 10 years when he was not only heir-apparent but also “partner and even protector of the imperial office” (Suet. *Tit.* 6.1). However, there was a dark side, since he was really his father’s security chief, serving as praetorian prefect (almost unprecedented, since he was a senator) and behaving in an arrogant and ruthless manner, with the result that his accession to power was widely dreaded. In addition, there is much that is unknown or, at least, uncertain about his life – the year of his birth, the dates of his two marriages (and which of his wives was the mother of Julia, his only child to survive to adulthood), his relationship with the exotic Berenice, his attitude towards his brother Domitian and, finally, the mystery of his death after a brief principate, which began with a huge natural disaster, followed by a great fire in Rome and a mysterious epidemic. The attraction for historians is, of course, the opportunity for a reconsideration of major problems and the possibility of suggesting new arguments in support of existing theories – or even of devising new ones.

1 Early life to 67

According to Suetonius in the first chapter of his *Titus*, Vespasian’s eldest child was born on December 30, 41 in a somewhat humble house in (probably) the area of the Campus Martius. The details are interesting, since the implication is that Vespasian was somewhat straitened financially (not the only time in his life that this was true); however, the year given is almost certainly wrong, since at *Tit.* 11 Suetonius states that he died on September 13, 81, two years, two months and 20 days after the death of Vespasian and

in the 42nd year of his life, which must mean that he had passed his 41st birthday and that he was therefore born at the end of 39, which is confirmed by Cassius Dio (at 66.18.4 and 26.4), who is generally reliable about such dates.

By late 39, Vespasian's senatorial career was well under way, since in 40 (probably) he became a praetor, earning in the process the undying hatred of Agrippina the Younger for a toadying speech he made on the Emperor Gaius' behalf dealing with the punishment of individuals implicated in the "conspiracy" against Gaius in Germany in 39 (Suet. *Vesp.* 2.3: see Jones 2000 ad loc.). Vespasian was also on friendly terms with Claudius and, particularly, with his powerful freedman minister Narcissus, receiving in 42 command of a legion in Germany (*II Augusta*), which soon (in 43 and with the same legion) became a command in the invasion of Britain: there he performed outstandingly in the subjugation of southern and southwestern Britain in 43–47. Because of this Titus, then aged seven, came to be educated at court alongside Claudius' son and heir Britannicus: the closeness between the two described by Suetonius (*Tit.* 2) may have been somewhat exaggerated later but, as Levick (1999, 20) points out, this claim was verifiable and, therefore, Suetonius' account is probably true. Likewise, the somewhat exuberant assertions made by Suetonius (*Tit.* 3) about Titus' remarkable and precocious excellence – possession of an outstanding memory, equal talents in all the arts of war and peace (including fluency in both Latin and Greek prose and verse) and musical talent as well – end on a sinister note with mention of his skill not only in shorthand but also in forging other people's handwriting!

Although Vespasian's career was somewhat muted after Claudius' marriage to Agrippina the Younger in 49 (Suet. *Vesp.* 4), Titus continued his education at court at least to the time of Britannicus' death in 55.¹ After this, however, it is quite difficult to trace Titus' life and the beginnings of his "career" to 67: the only direct clues we have come from chapter 4 of Suetonius' *Life*, where we learn that he served as a military tribune in Germany and Britain (circa 57–60, or perhaps a bit later circa 60–63), winning praise and repute in both places (see Tac. *Hist.* 2.1.1–2, 77.1); thereafter, whenever that was exactly – perhaps not until circa 63, he both entered the legal profession, pleading in one of the civil courts, apparently, and married for the first time: his wife was Arrecina Tertulla, daughter of Gaius' praetorian prefect M. Arrecinus Clemens and his wife, who is thought to have been a Julia – since the daughter of this marriage was named (Flavia) Julia. Tertulla died, possibly even when Julia was born (in the latter part of 64, it would seem), and Titus then married Marcia Furnilla, from a senatorial family, who also bore him a daughter (though she seems not to have survived infancy). What happened next is indicative of the fact that upper-class Roman marriages were simply matters of convenience and of social or political advantage: Furnilla was the niece of Q. Marcius Barea Soranus, a suffect consul in the year 52; however, his destruction (and that of his daughter Servilia) on false charges in 66 (details in Tac. *Ann.* 16.23, 30–33) obviously "tainted" close relatives. Since Vespasian was always an enthusiastic supporter of the house of the Julii and the Claudii and wished to stay in their favor, Titus quickly divorced his wife, probably in the spring of 66, if only to maintain his own standing with Nero and his ministers. At this time also he held a quaestorship, which made him a senator.

So far, then Titus' career seems to have been fairly conventional, at least up to the latter part of 66 – and perhaps even typical. One obvious item, however, is missing from our sources: there is no mention of his mother Flavia Domitilla, except at Suet. *Vesp.* 3,

where we learn that she was of very humble birth and bore Vespasian two sons and a daughter, and also that both she and the daughter (who came after Domitian, born on October 24, 51) had died by the time Vespasian became emperor (officially on July 1, 69). Her father Flavius Liberalis, was also of fairly low social status but, from his name and provenance, he may have been distantly related to Vespasian. There is, however, no sign that Titus' mother had any influence for good or bad on her son, unlike the formidable Vespasia Polla, who drove her younger son Vespasian to seek a senatorial career by sarcastic and demeaning insults (Suet. *Vesp.* 2.2).

2 Judea

The next major episode in Titus' life arose through the apparently strange behavior of Nero in choosing Vespasian to lead the main Roman response to the Jewish rebellion, which seems to have broken out in May of 66 (Joseph. *BJ* 2.284 specifies the month Artemisius in the 11th year of Nero's reign, which is taken by Nicols 1978, 46–7 to be within the period May 19 to June 18, a view followed by Levick 1999, 40). Although receipt of news from the East to the West was much slower than the other way round (because of the prevailing westerly winds in the Mediterranean during the summer months), word of this rebellion, whether transmitted by sea or by land, should certainly have reached Rome by late July. Nero left Rome for his tour of Greece in August, 66, according to Bradley (1978b, 62–3, 65), which explains why Vespasian, a tried and trusted commander of sufficiently humble origin to represent no threat to Nero, was a member of Nero's suite, even though his dislike of Nero's artistic performances was well-known (Suet. *Vesp.* 4.4; cf. *Vesp.* 16 and Cass. Dio 66.11.2 for variants). By early September the Antonia fortress in Jerusalem was under attack (Joseph. *BJ* 2.430) and by September 24 the citadel (Herod's Palace) was under siege (*BJ* 2.440). Planning for a possible take-over in the area of Syria–Judea by Vespasian will have begun about the middle of October, and it may have been then that Titus was summoned to Greece also (cf. *BJ* 3.8).

With the complete failure of Roman counter-insurgency efforts in Judea in 66, culminating in a botched attempt by C. Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, to recapture Jerusalem, which in turn resulted in the loss of about 6000 Roman and allied soldiers about November 25, 66 (Joseph. *BJ* 2.499–555; see also 556–8, where Cestius, who died soon afterwards, possibly by suicide (Tac. *Hist.* 5.10.1), put the blame for the defeat on Gessius Florus, the Prefect of Judea), events began to move more rapidly. At the end of December, 66, or near the beginning of January, 67, Vespasian was formally given a command to deal with the situation: its exact formulation is not known but it may, initially, have included control of both Syria and Judea. Also, the three legions assigned to him for the Jewish War included two that had previously been under Corbulo's overall command in the East.² Vespasian also arranged for Titus to be made legate of the third of his legions (*xv Apollinaris*, then in Egypt in preparation for Nero's proposed eastern expedition; cf. Morgan 2004, 136 n. 39).

At this time (December, 66) Titus was but 27 years old. It is, however, quite clear from the fairly frequent glimpses we get of him during 67 and 68 that, as the commander-in-chief's son, he was privileged among the legionary commanders, being given the task of leading the final onslaught at Jotapata, Japha, Tarichaeae, Gamala, and finally

Gischala (all in 67, with Gischala completing the recovery of Galilee: Joseph. *BJ* 4.120). At Gischala, though, where he was in sole charge of operations, he fell for a ruse on the part of the rebel leader John, a native of the place, which enabled him and his most fanatical followers to escape to Jerusalem, a misstep that would later cost the Romans dearly. At this stage it is clear that Titus was inexperienced militarily and, although brave and dashing, he was not anything like as skilled or as careful as his father.

In 68, there was not as much military activity as in 67, perhaps because of the outbreak of the revolt of C. Julius Vindex in Gaul around the middle of March (of which Vespasian may have had some foreknowledge: Plut. *Galb.* 4.4 states that Vindex had sounded out other provincial governors, but that, with the sole exception of Galba, they had all forwarded the correspondence to Nero). Vespasian may have wished to be ready to move troops west rapidly if Nero called upon their services. However, the death of Nero in the early part of June and the subsequent failure of the new emperor Galba to confirm Vespasian in his command in Judea, along with the dismissal of Vespasian's brother Flavius Sabinus as urban prefect in Rome, will have added to Vespasian's uncertainty. Titus, however, was not idle in 68, though he does not seem to have taken part in such military action as Vespasian actually undertook; instead, he was sent to smooth out problems of overlapping jurisdiction that had arisen between Vespasian and the new governor of Syria, C. Licinius Mucianus (sent out by Nero to replace the now-deceased Cestius Rufus), who had arrived in Antioch by late October, 67. Titus' task was not easy and it is clear that there was a lot of ego-stroking involved in dealing with the somewhat touchy Mucianus. But Titus' considerable personal charm and tact, attributes which he had learned to deploy with success at Nero's court, won Mucianus over and certainly, from the time of Nero's death, he and Vespasian had laid aside their personal differences and had agreed to collaborate in the future (cf. Tac. *Hist.* 2.5.2).

By late 68, news from the West was even more alarming, as reports arrived of Galba's "slow and bloody march" from Spain to Rome, involving multiple killings of people such as a consul designate, an ex-consul, two provincial governors, and "thousands" of would-be legionary soldiers as he approached the city, probably in late October – and all of this followed by highly erratic administrative behavior, heavily influenced by freedmen and slaves (Tac. *Hist.* 1.6.1–7.3). Vespasian therefore decided to send Titus, along with M. Julius Agrippa II (an influential and notably pro-Roman Jewish client king) and other staff officers, to use his diplomatic talents in paying formal respects to Galba and in attempting to win his favor (Tac. *Hist.* 1.10.3). Titus' party made its way slowly by sea (it was not the usual sailing season) and had reached Corinth by about the end of January, 69, when they learned of Galba's murder in Rome on January 15 (at the hands of the praetorian guard and in favor of M. Salvius Otho), and also of the rapidly burgeoning revolt of Aulus Vitellius, who had been proclaimed emperor by the legions in Germany at the beginning of the new year. In Corinth, therefore, Titus and some of his companions met and considered thoroughly the implications both of carrying on to Rome and of returning immediately to the east. Rather than let himself become a hostage in the hands of either Otho or Vitellius, he decided to go back; and, in describing this deliberation, Tacitus also represents Titus as thinking about the outcome if Vespasian were to make a bid for power (*Hist.* 2.1.3; this passage provides us with the earliest date for any thoughts of a Flavian attempt to seize power). Titus then coasted along the shores of Achaëa and Asia, stopping at Rhodes and at Paphos in Cyprus, where he consulted the oracle of

Paphian Venus, receiving information about a safe voyage over the open sea to the Syrian coast and also gaining confidence about a great and important future. This last item does not really pertain to his journey back to Judea, but to the idea of a Flavian bid for power – with ultimate benefit to himself. If Titus really was the first person to contemplate such a scheme, he will, soon after his return, have communicated it to both Vespasian and Mucianus; and they quickly agreed that the attempt should be made, but only after Otho and Vitellius had fought to a conclusion. And so the idea was put “on hold” for the time being (Tac. *Hist.* 2.7, referring to the period after Titus’ return, probably in the latter part of February, by which time the armies of the East had sworn allegiance to Otho).³ It was, however, Mucianus who subsequently worked upon a hesitant and reluctant Vespasian (for the latter’s doubts and fears, see Tac. *Hist.* 2.74–5), culminating in the brilliant call to arms which Tacitus puts into his mouth at the so-called “Mount Carmel conference,” held on or near the border of Syria and Judea towards the middle of June, 69. At this point the die was irrevocably cast, and one of Vespasian’s key allies, Tiberius Julius Alexander, Prefect of Egypt, proclaimed Vespasian emperor in Alexandria on July 1 (a date to which Vespasian’s *imperium* was subsequently back-dated after his formal recognition in Rome by the senate in late December).

The importance of Titus in the Flavian “launch” is underlined by the fact that soon after the Mount Carmel conference Vespasian sent Titus again to Mucianus and he had not yet returned to Caesarea by July 3, when the legions of Judea “spontaneously” saluted Vespasian as emperor (followed soon thereafter by the legions of Syria). Likewise, when a final organizational conference was held at Berytus (Beirut) in the latter part of July (Tac. *Hist.* 2.81–2), where all the neighboring client rulers paid homage to Vespasian and the major policy decisions for the immediate future were taken, it was decided that Mucianus would lead a substantial military force towards the West, Vespasian would go to Egypt to secure the grain supply (in order to threaten Rome with possible starvation) and plan any other moves that might be made from North Africa, and that Titus would take over as supreme commander in Judea and Syria. He and Vespasian remained in Syria–Judea until October, 69, raising money for the cause and ensuring the security of the region (and indeed of the eastern frontier of the empire generally); thereafter they both went to Egypt, where Vespasian remained until his departure to Italy in early September, 70, while Titus returned to Judea in the early spring of that year to direct the siege of Jerusalem, which began about mid-April and proved to be nasty, brutish – and long, ending on (probably) September 8.

Titus was too inexperienced to be in supreme command of a demanding operation such as this – a fact that was clearly understood by Vespasian, since he appointed as Titus’ chief of staff his trusted friend and ally Tiberius Julius Alexander. Nonetheless, and in spite of Alexander’s experienced guidance, there are many criticisms that can be leveled against Titus’ “hands on” approach to almost everything during this period: of these, two stand out. The first is Titus’ personal recklessness, characterized by his constant dashing from one place to the other and trying always to lead from the front, on at least two occasions involving serious personal injury and on others causing complications and unnecessary loss of life on the Roman side (Jones 1984, 53–4 and 1992, 412–17). The second is the extreme brutality of his conduct, not only at Jerusalem, where it is particularly clear, but throughout the entire war. The number of occasions on which prisoners were simply massacred is surprising (even if the Romans were



Fig. 4.1 Titus as military commander, marble statue from Herculaneum, h. 2.11 m. Naples, Museo Nazionale inv. 6059. Photograph by William Storage, courtesy of rome101.com

following the usual line of “hate us, but fear us”). However, the total number of Jews killed during the period May, 66 to October, 70 (when Titus regarded the war as virtually won) cannot be calculated on any plausible basis. Josephus frequently provides figures on a place-by-place basis but, as is typical of such accounts, these always seem to be on the high side. At *BJ* 6.414–21 he puts the number of those who perished in Jerusalem during and at the end of the siege at 1.1 million; but many died of starvation and not in combat. It could be that this figure represents the total number killed in the war, but that is only a guess.

Titus did not return to Italy immediately after the fall of Jerusalem, since a considerable amount of tidying-up and long-term planning had to be done; and most of this was based on decisions taken by Vespasian. Titus is increasingly represented in our sources as

succumbing to arrogance and rather self-indulgent behavior, which is said to have incurred Vespasian's displeasure (as in Suet. *Tit.* 5.3). But this is the beginning of the "bad Titus" image, which is built up in accounts of his behavior from this point to the death of Vespasian – in order to provide an amazing contrast when he suddenly morphs into the "good Titus" in 79. Mention is made of the enthusiastic acclamation "Imperator!" bestowed on Titus by his victorious troops as the Temple in Jerusalem was burning (Joseph. *BJ* 6.136; Suet. *Tit.* 5.2); this was inappropriate as Titus was not commanding "under his own auspices," as is made clear by an inscription of the year 80, which describes Titus as having prevailed in the war "under the instructions, plans and auspices of his father" (*CIL* 6.944 = *ILS* 264 = *MW* 530). We also hear of him wearing a diadem (a sign of kingship in Roman tradition) on his final visit to Egypt before returning to Rome (Suet. *Tit.* 5.3). In addition, a matter arose which required the deployment of Titus' diplomatic talents: soon after the fall of Jerusalem, and clearly acting under orders left to him by Vespasian when he had departed for Rome from Egypt in about September, 70, Titus sent the legion *xii Fulminata* north to Melitene near the Euphrates in Cappadocia (Joseph. *BJ* 7.180), a move which caused some distress in the neighboring Parthian empire – and rightly so, since it represented a return to a more active Roman military presence on the upper Euphrates frontier and a foreign policy similar to that pursued by Nero when Corbulo was in charge.⁴ Whatever the nature of the Parthian complaint, Titus seems to have requested a meeting with representatives of their government and, with an escort of two legions (about 10 000 men), he marched to Antioch in late November, 70, and from there to Zeugma, an important crossing on the Euphrates between Roman and Parthian territory, where he met envoys from King Vologaesēs I, who presented him with a golden crown in honor of his "victory over the Jews." He entertained the envoys (though what actually transpired is not reported in Josephus' account at *BJ* 7.105–6; for analysis see Jones 1985, 351–2) and then returned to Antioch. Relations with Parthia remained cordial, though somewhat frosty after 75 (Cass. Dio 66.15.3).

Once the diplomatic business was completed (early in 71), Titus returned to Alexandria by way of Antioch and Jerusalem; thereafter he sent the legions that had accompanied him on this mission back to their bases. He then returned to Italy, arriving in Rome, it would seem, in the latter part of June,⁵ soon after which a very elaborately planned triumph was staged. Technically, it was Vespasian's triumph (cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 8.1), since he had been the supreme commander in the Jewish war, but since Titus had actually brought the war to a conclusion and was now heir-apparent, Vespasian "shared" it with his son. It certainly took place before the end of June, since Domitian appeared in the parade also (specifically in his role as suffect consul during the months of March to June: Cass. Dio 66.12.1a). Again, we can see signs of careful planning; for soon after the triumph and from July 1, 71, Titus was formally granted tribunician power (*tribunicia potestas*), which had, since the early years of Augustus' rule, been the mark of an emperor or his designated heir.

Most of the constitutional finagling for the Flavian dynasty appears to have been carried out by Mucianus, who had been in charge of affairs in Rome from late December, 69 until Vespasian's arrival in the capital by the middle of November, 70. This included passage of the so-called *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* (Law concerning the *imperium* of Vespasian), the designation of both Titus and Domitian as "Caesars," and the managing

of the senate through some difficult debates as its members attempted to settle old scores and punish various Neronian loyalists for their now unacceptable earlier activities. It is important to note that Vespasian was always good at “keeping his hands clean” and projecting his image as a genial *civilis princeps* (“citizen emperor”) while others did any necessary “dirty work.” After Titus’ return the dirty work fell particularly to him as Vespasian’s “partner and protector.”

3 Titus and Berenice

Julia Berenice (born in 28) was a great-granddaughter of Herod the Great and with her brother M. Julius Agrippa II (born in 27) formed what was probably the most important Roman support group among Eastern client rulers during the later Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods. From 49 until his death around 92, Agrippa ruled a kingdom which fluctuated greatly in extent. Unlike his sister Berenice, he never married; she on the other hand was married three times (her first husband, Marcus, was a brother of Tib. Julius Alexander) and had children (two sons, by her second husband), but none of these marriages had lasted; and, since she frequently lived with her brother, there were allegations of incest (Joseph. *AJ* 20.145; Juv. 6.156–60). It can, however, be fairly stated that she really was, in many ways, her brother’s consort: Tacitus, for example, twice refers to her as “Queen” (*Hist.* 2.2.1 and 2.81.2), as does Suetonius (*Tit.* 7.1). When Titus first met her, then, at Agrippa II’s capital, Caesarea Philippi, in August of 67 (plausibly derived from Joseph. *BJ* 3.443–8; cf. Tac. *Hist.* 2.81.2, for the year 69), Berenice was almost 40 years of age and was beautiful, influential, rich and, above all, exotic – and it was to all of this that Titus, then aged 27, seems to have responded enthusiastically.

At this point the question of Titus’ sexuality inevitably arises: he seems to have been what nowadays is referred to as “bisexual” (as were many of the leading characters in history, such as Philip of Macedon and Julius Caesar, though there was no Latin term for this). Titus was married (twice), and marriage and the production of children were, in Rome, certainly regarded as a normal part of being an adult male. However, after his second marriage ended in 65, he had, it would seem, only one child living, his daughter Julia; and thereafter he displayed no sign at all of wishing to marry again. Further, Suetonius tells us that during the 70s (though perhaps not until about 75) Titus came under suspicion of “voluptuous living,” since he prolonged his carousing with his wildest friends until the middle of the night; in addition, he was accused of lustful behavior, because of his troops of “fancy-boys” and eunuchs (*Tit.* 7.1). By the Flavian era, possession of eunuchs for use as catamites (begun in Rome during the Augustan period by Maecenas, Sejanus, and Tiberius’ son Drusus) was regarded as a clear indicator of moral decadence (Murison 2004, 349–50).

In his sexuality, Titus can be most closely compared to the later emperor Trajan, who was married (possibly twice; see Syme 1958, 249, n.1) though without much enthusiasm, and who was predominantly homosexual and said to have been “seriously enthusiastic about boys and wine” (Cass. Dio 68.7.4), which included a passion for handsome male dancers (Cass. Dio 68.10.2, 68.21.2–3). Titus, besides his partying and eunuchs, is also said to have had skilled dancers, who later became stage-stars, among his “fancy-boys”

(Suet. *Tit.* 7.2). These emperors were not, of course, consorting with high-class Roman youths or, indeed, with citizens at all: most probably they were slaves or of former slave background (in Latin called *libertini*, which gives us an interesting by-form in modern English.) Indeed, sexual relations with slaves were simply taken for granted and had no social or marital implications, so that with female slaves they did not constitute adultery; and slaves seem to have expected, and tolerated, sexual use by their masters (cf. the words of Trimalchio at Petron. *Sat.* 75.11). There is one further important point: in Flavian Rome there was no prejudice against homosexuality, provided that, as with heterosexuality, it was active rather than passive; that is, the lead participant in sexual congress (usually a male), was the penetrator rather than the penetrated – and this applied no matter which human orifice was involved.

This raises the question of Titus' relationship with Mucianus, whom Tacitus seems to be describing, somewhat coyly, as fully homosexual at *Hist.* 2.5.1, and whom Suetonius calls "a person of notorious lewdness" at *Vesp.* 13. We should note also the remark attributed to Vespasian in this same context: "I, however, am a man" (*ego tamen vir sum*), which is not saying that Mucianus is a homosexual, but that he is a *pathicus*, a passive homosexual. It is not really surprising that Mucianus' attitude towards Vespasian was described by Tacitus as "not unfavorable", but towards Titus it was "more enthusiastic" (*Hist.* 2.74.1). Was the relationship homoerotic? We may suspect this, but we must admit that there is not a shred of evidence to support it.

Titus' relationship with Berenice is known in considerably greater detail. Tacitus states that there was a common belief in early 69 that Titus decided to return to the eastern Mediterranean area, abandoning his mission to Rome, because "he was ablaze with passion for Queen Berenice," adding as his own view that Titus' "youthful inclinations did not recoil from her" which, besides toning things down considerably, may also allude to the age gap between them. So far, then, all we have is some evidence that a warm friendship had developed, but how warm is not entirely clear. Equally, we have no idea of how things may have progressed between early 69 and the time of Titus' departure for Rome in the spring of 71, and especially during the period after the fall of Jerusalem. However, since neither Berenice nor Titus seems to have been much interested in the "married state," and since Roman marriage was intended primarily for the production of heirs, it seems unlikely that that was the goal of either of them. Titus did, apparently, find her way of life fascinating and, from the time immediately after the fall of Jerusalem, he may well have combined brutality and arrogance on the one hand with a self-indulgent and hedonistic sensuality on the other. This clearly persisted but seems not to have been notorious in Italy until after the arrival in Rome in 75 of Berenice and her brother Agrippa (the reasons for this will appear in the next section of this chapter). Titus' friendship with Berenice was immediately reanimated and he decided that he wanted her company and assistance on a permanent basis. There was, moreover, a model for this: Nero had had a rich, dissolute, older, and glamorous female "friend" – Calvia Crispinilla, described by Tacitus as Nero's *magistra libidinum* (*Hist.* 1.73: translations vary from "tutor in vice" to "mistress of revels"). Berenice was lodged in Titus' part of the palace in Rome and it came to be assumed that they were cohabiting. (We shall return to this topic after consideration of the first part of the story of Titus' role in Vespasian's administration after their shared triumph in 71.)

4 Titus as Heir-Apparent (71–79)

During these years Titus was effectively his father's partner, but it should be understood that he was never "co-emperor." Vespasian alone was *Augustus*, *pontifex maximus* (head of the Roman state religion) and *pater patriae* (father of the country); no one shared these titles during his lifetime. Titus, on the other hand, did possess *imperium* throughout this period (though its formulation is unclear); he shared every ordinary consulship which Vespasian had and, after his return to Italy, he shared every imperial salutation bestowed on Vespasian; in addition, on every occasion for which records survive, when the Arval Brothers made offerings and prayers for Vespasian's safety, his name was added; he was co-censor with his father in 73–74 and, as "protector of the imperial office" he eventually became praetorian prefect, perhaps in 73, when the previous prefect, M. Arrecinus Clemens (a senator and relative by marriage of Vespasian, who had been given the job by Mucianus: see Tac. *Hist.* 4.68.1–2) was nominated for a suffect consulship in the latter part of that year.

Although Suetonius tells us that Titus took over the management of almost all government duties (*Tit.* 6.1), most of the examples given, such as the drawing-up of edicts and the dictating of official letters, are matters of bureaucratic routine; and it is frequently pointed out that the main strategic decisions – concerning provincial and military organization, matters of state finance and the restoration of buildings (such as the Capitoline temple) and records destroyed in the civil war, plus new temples and, above all else, the planning and construction of the Flavian Amphitheater – were all Vespasian's. It is, nonetheless, true that as Vespasian's chief administrative officer, Titus inevitably came to supplant Mucianus, who seems to fade out of the picture fairly rapidly after mid-71. Vespasian was anxious to build up the prestige and authority of his family (hence the frequent ordinary consulships for himself and Titus) and there was little in the way of grand recognition available for Mucianus for his services as Vespasian's alter ego from December 69 to November 70: in fact, all he got was two suffect consulships, in 70 and 72, in each case as successor to Vespasian (to whom *he* clearly regarded himself as equal, if not superior; cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 13; Tac. *Hist.* 4.4.1; Cass. Dio 66.2.4).

In spite of this, there are signs that Mucianus remained influential with Vespasian for the rest of his life,⁶ since he persuaded him to take strong measures against philosophers in general and the so-called "Stoic opposition" in particular. The most detailed account of this episode comes from Cass. Dio 66.13, where we learn that Vespasian banished all philosophers from Rome on Mucianus' prompting (66.13.1 and 20), and that eventually he came to hate the famous Stoic C. Helvidius Priscus (although there had been some earlier friendship and mutual respect between them; see Cass. Dio 66.12.1 and Tac. *Hist.* 4.5–6). The falling-out seems to have centered mainly upon Vespasian's openly dynastic aims for his sons. Not surprisingly, Titus seems to have approved of Mucianus' influence in this regard.

Since the 1950s, there has been a tendency, beginning with Crook (1951) to see friction (if nothing worse) between Titus and Mucianus on the subject of Berenice. There is, though, no actual evidence to prove that such a quarrel or struggle ever happened. The recent minimalist discussion of the Titus–Berenice relationship by Keaveney and Madden (2003) examines the main theories advanced since 1951 and

concludes that the reason for Berenice's ultimate dismissal by Titus was simply that she had contributed to making him unpopular in Rome (which is exactly what Cassius Dio says at 66.15.4).

When did this happen? Cassius Dio puts it in the general context of events happening during and after 75 (a date given at 66.15.1), and expands on his comment by mentioning general public gossip and open denunciations "in the theater" of Titus and Berenice by "certain sophists of the Cynic school" (66.15.5): these were apparently not Romans but Greeks, and theirs was no quiet murmuring against perceived excesses but a blatant public attack. Titus' response was swift and drastic – public flogging in one case and execution in another. He seems to have been very sensitive to this sort of criticism and he may even have suspected that, ultimately, some sort of *Roman* opposition was being organized, since it was one of *his* ploys for getting rid of people (according to Suet. *Tit.* 6.1): he would arrange for members of the Guard to denounce them in "theaters and camps" and then he would quickly dispose of them. All of this, then, is played out in Cassius Dio's account before Vespasian's death. Suetonius, by contrast, places the dismissal of Berenice in the context of Titus' "change of character"; and it comes immediately after Vespasian's death (*Tit.* 7.2). This latter date seems more plausible, since Titus remained in his "hedonistic mode" until he became emperor.

We now come to the year 79 and it is clear that all was not well. Roman opinion seems to have been dreading the accession of Titus as "another Nero" (Suet. *Tit.* 7.1) and, given Titus' edginess, the regime does not seem to have been as self-confident, or secure, as one might have expected after almost 10 years. The greatest sign of this is the conspiracy that was fomented by Aulus Caecina Alienus and T. Eprius Marcellus, both recipients of Vespasian's favor and friendship and both considered pillars of the regime. The only plausible explanation for such activity is that Vespasian's health was showing signs of deterioration and they both dreaded Titus' accession to power. Again, Titus moved swiftly and decisively: Caecina was quickly murdered (allegedly he had a speech ready for delivery to troops) and Marcellus, a particular Flavian favorite, was brought to trial before the Senate and, after being found guilty, cut his throat with a razor (Suet. *Tit.* 6.2; Cass. Dio 66.16.3–4).

5 The principate of Titus

Vespasian died on June 23/24, 79, and Titus succeeded without overt opposition, as had been planned; but according to Suetonius, "he had incurred such massive ill will that scarcely any emperor came to power with so negative a reputation and against the wishes of everyone" (*Tit.* 6.2). Almost immediately, it would seem, Titus paused, took stock of his situation and realized that he would have to change his "image" totally and irrevocably. In taking over from Vespasian he would have to present himself to the world looking as much like Vespasian as possible – and, of course, there was no one available to "do the dirty work" as Vespasian had had in Rome with Mucianus until his return in late 70 or with Titus himself, wherever he was, from 69 onwards. It is a tribute to his steely determination and his natural charm (when he chose to deploy it) that this cynical makeover fooled almost everyone: Suetonius seems totally persuaded by it and, therefore, the rest of his *Titus* is hagiographic. Cassius Dio, by contrast, although somewhat affected by the

hagiographic tradition, is considerably more wary; cf. 66.18.1: “perhaps because he really did undergo a change,” with suitably cautious comments at 66.18.3–5, pointing to his short span of life after his accession and the fact that he died at the peak of his glory and was therefore possibly more fortunate than virtuous. The result for historians today is that almost any remark made about him in our sources can be thought of as having a surface meaning and possibly also a buried “true” meaning. For example, Suetonius tells us that Titus announced that he would accept the position of *pontifex maximus* in order to “keep his hands clean,” and that he kept his word because thereafter he neither caused, nor turned a blind eye to, the death of any man (*Tit.* 9.1). This might be thought to imply careful deliberation or even hesitation about accepting the office and, indeed, although coins designating Titus “*Augustus*” were struck between June 23/24 and June 30, 79 with no mention of *PM*, this need not imply any delay, since the position of *pontifex maximus* could be assumed only at Rome – and Titus may have been in Sabine country when his father died and remained there for several days afterwards.

Titus clearly had difficulties with his brother Domitian, who seems to have believed that Vespasian had appointed his two sons as joint-heirs to the principate. Although our sources maintain that Titus, from the very first day of his rule, always insisted that Domitian was his “partner and successor” (Suet. *Tit.* 9.3) and, indeed, allowed him to be his partner as ordinary consul in 80, he never granted him any of the regular signs of an heir-presumptive, such as sharing his imperial salutations or tribunician power. This lack of collegiality will simply have stoked Domitian’s sense of grievance.

With regard to the senate and the Roman nobility in general, Titus ensured good relations by confirming all grants made by previous emperors, by undertaking not to put any senators to death, by refusing to countenance any charges of treason, and by banishing some of the hated class of “informers” and selling others into slavery. With the population as a whole he gained popularity through the opening of new public baths and by the gladiatorial shows he mounted, including the spectacular opening games for the Flavian Amphitheater, which lasted 100 days from the spring of the year 80 and involved additional naval displays (created by flooding the main deck of the amphitheater and by reusing the huge pre-existing Grove of Gaius and Lucius). External policy, on the other hand, is hard to assess, since initiatives, if any, were hardly much advanced during a regime that lasted just over two years and two and a half months.

What is most striking about the principate of Titus is the number of catastrophes which befell the Roman state in 79 and 80: the great eruption of Vesuvius on August 23/24, 79, occurring almost exactly two months after Vespasian’s death; the great fire of Rome in 80, which burned for three days and nights and, starting from the area of the Capitol and spreading towards the northwest into the Campus Martius area, seems to have done as much damage as the great Neronian fire of 64; and finally an epidemic “of a magnitude virtually unparalleled” (Suet. *Tit.* 8.3, precise details not given), which afflicted the city of Rome after the great fire and may well have been caused by generally unsanitary conditions existing in its aftermath. In responding to these disasters Titus is seen at his best, displaying “not merely the anxious concern of an emperor but also the special love of a parent, both offering consolation in edicts and supplying practical help to the limits of his resources” (Suet. *Tit.* 8.3, which shows just how literally a conscientious emperor took his title *pater patriae*); indeed, he refused all offers of financial assistance from individuals, cities or foreign powers,

even though he regarded the expense of restoration in Rome itself as “ruinous” (Cass. Dio 66.24.4; Suet. *Tit.* 8.4).

6 Titus’ death

In two passages Cassius Dio states quite bluntly that, in most matters, Titus achieved nothing exceptional or really important (66.25.1 and 26.1). But we should recall that Dio was somewhat underwhelmed by Titus’ personality makeover and, given his own personal experience of emperors such as Commodus, Didius Julianus, Caracalla, and Elagabalus, he was generally hard to impress (on this and its implications for Cassius Dio’s ideas about what a good emperor should be like, see Murison 1999, 23–5).

There is, nonetheless, an odd factual basis to these statements that merits comment. From the conclusion of the games to mark the dedication of the Flavian Amphitheater (that is, by July, 80) until the death of Titus on September 13, 81, the record is almost completely blank⁷ – and, seemingly, nothing of any importance happened in the latter part of his short principate. Furthermore, there are two other strange-seeming matters mentioned in our sources. First, Cassius Dio tells us that at the end of the dedicatory games, Titus “wept copiously so that all the people saw it” (66.26.1, echoed by Suetonius at *Tit.* 10.1, though his context seems to refer to 81, since he immediately moves to a description of Titus’ end). Unless Titus wept copiously at the end of all games, there is a muddle here and it seems that some of our ancient sources assigned the dedicatory games to the year 81; but this is certainly incorrect. Titus, then, may have been depressed by July 80. Second, in September, 81, when he was traveling towards the ancestral Flavian home at Cutilae near Reate in Sabine territory, Titus was stricken by a sudden fever, at which point he is said “looking up to heaven, to have bewailed bitterly the fact that his life was being taken from him though he did not deserve it” (Suet. *Tit.* 10.1): how did he know he was going to die? So, we are left with a Titus depressed in July, 80 and knowing that he was going to die as soon as a fever seized him in September, 81 (and scarcely appearing in public at all during the intervening period).⁸ Predictably, there are stories about how the evil Domitian, who had apparently rushed to his brother’s side when he fell ill, was responsible for hastening his end (Cass. Dio 66.26.2; cf. Aur. Vict. *de Caes.* 10.5; also Philostr. *VA* 6.32).

Conclusion

When one considers the entire course of his life, Titus inevitably disappoints. The multi-talented child from a rising family, receiving at the court of Claudius the best education available in the Roman world, and displaying precocious skills in literary, athletic, and musical pursuits, was remembered, at this stage of his life, mainly for his talents at tachygraphy and forgery; the young man, praised for his hard work and self-control as a junior officer in the army, who became commander of a legion at a much earlier stage of his career than was customary, earned for himself a reputation for dangerous recklessness and almost pathological brutality, masked somewhat by personal charm and considerable diplomatic talent. As his father’s heir, partner, and protector in the governance of the

empire, he became praetorian prefect and conducted himself in an arrogant and thuggish manner which, combined with his pursuit of somewhat exotic and scandalous pleasures, caused openly voiced fears in Rome that he would become a second Nero. When he did become emperor, however, he made a great effort at ruthless self-evaluation and decided to tone down those aspects of his life and conduct which had caused the greatest offence. In this he was hugely successful, aided in part by the opportunities for humanitarian gestures and financial largesse presented by the natural disasters that occurred so soon after his accession. He was remembered by Suetonius as “the darling and delight of the human race” (*amor ac deliciae generis humani*, *Tit.* 1), and likewise thereafter by a stream of Latin writers all the way to Ausonius in the latter part of the fourth century.

For us today, this simply will not wash: Titus did not altogether give up his exotic style of living after he became emperor. Suetonius (*Tit.* 7.2) mentions that he gave up “some” of his youthful male darlings, presumably still keeping the rest, nor did he in any way abate his penchant for brutality in the treatment of prisoners-of-war and condemned criminals (his re-enactments of famous sea-battles in 80 seem to have involved hundreds, if not thousands, of such people, most of whom were killed; see Cass. Dio 66.25.3 and Coleman 1990, 70–72). Historically, Titus seems always to have been more popular in the Latin West than in the Greek East, and of our ancient sources, it was Cassius Dio, the Greek historian of Rome, who had his measure best: “If he had lived longer, he might have been regarded as enjoying good fortune rather than possessing real excellence” (66.18.5).

NOTES

- 1 Presumably in January or early February, since Britannicus would have turned 14 on February 12, at which time he would, most probably, have assumed the “toga of manhood”; he had not done this at the time of his death, since Tacitus states that when he was poisoned (not *quite* certain—it could have been an epileptic fit) he was not reclining, as adults did, but sitting at a table for children (*Ann.* 13.16.1).
- 2 Cn. Domitius Corbulo (on whom see Syme 1970) had been Nero’s great general throughout his principate; accordingly, he should have been the obvious person to deal with the Jewish revolt in 66. However, since the Pisonian conspiracy in 65, Nero had been purging possible aristocratic malcontents; and the so-called “Vinician” conspiracy, fomented by Annius Vinicianus at Beneventum and detected before June 19, 66 (cf. the Acts of the Arval Brothers for that date), led to the deaths not only of Vinicianus and Barea Soranus and his daughter Servilia, but also of Corbulo, Vinicianus’ father-in-law (Bradley 1978a, 221; 1978b, 62–4), who was summoned in friendly terms by Nero to meet him in Greece, but then ordered to commit suicide upon his arrival, unarmed, at Cenchræe, the port of Corinth on the Saronic Gulf (Cass. Dio 63.17.5–6). The date of this event is nowhere recorded (it is usually said to be simply “66–67”); but if Vinicianus was executed in late June and Nero departed for Greece in August, 66, he had almost certainly decided to get rid of Corbulo by the time he left Rome: hence Vespasian’s inclusion in his suite; and Corbulo’s death probably occurred soon after Nero’s arrival in Greece, in late August (Bradley 1978b, 72 suggests tentatively that Nero was in Corinth at that time).
- 3 It should also be noted that had Otho prevailed in the struggle with Vitellius (as would probably have happened if the first battle of Bedriacum had occurred *after* the arrival of all the pro-Othonian legions from the Balkans and the Danube area), there would have been no Flavian attempt in 69. It was these same legions, whose soldiers felt both robbed of victory and humiliated

- because of their subsequent treatment by the Vitellian victors, that were to provide the strike-force which brought about a rapid Flavian victory in late 69.
- 4 This may have been part of a deal struck by Vespasian with Mucianus and others who had served with Corbulo in the East to obtain their support for the Flavian cause in mid-69 (with the actual leg-work done by Titus). We should recall Syme's lapidary comment: "The proclamation of Vespasian was the work of Corbulo's men, and their revenge" (Syme 1958, 593). We should also note that, early in 70, Vespasian had, as *pater familias*, approved of his younger son's marriage to Corbulo's daughter, Domitia Longina.
 - 5 Suet. *Tit.* 5.3 seems to be in error in suggesting that this return was planned hurriedly and carried out at top speed because Titus had created the impression that he was planning to take over the imperial role from Vespasian; so that, anxious to reassure his father, he arrived in Rome unexpectedly and took Vespasian by surprise.
 - 6 Mucianus was dead by 77, as can be seen from a remark of Pliny the Elder at *NH* 32.62 (published that year), which applies to Mucianus the verb *fuit*, meaning "he was (but is no more)". In all probability, he died some time before 77.
 - 7 Almost, but not quite: on May 19, 81 the Arval Brothers record the presence of Titus at their annual rituals performed for the mysterious Dea Dia at their sanctuary 8 km south of Rome. There was a total of six people present. (He had attended the same rituals on the corresponding date in 80.)
 - 8 The safe thing for a historian to do at this point is to leave this topic alone, since the evidence is hardly copious. For one alternative approach see Murison (1995).

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FURTHER READING

Jones (1984) remains an indispensable in-depth study of Titus and his principate. Griffin (2000) offers an excellent overview of the entire Flavian period, and of Titus in particular (esp. 46–54). For Suetonius' account, the relevant sections of Jones and Milns (2002) offer helpful guidance; Murison (1999) does likewise for Cassius Dio's account.

Mucianus, Titus' coadjutor in the planning and launching of the Flavian movement, has become an object of serious interest: see the *References* and *Further Reading* in CHAPTER 2, THE REMARKABLE RISE OF THE FLAVIANS. As for Berenice, our principal source of information is Josephus, the one-time insurrectionist-general turned Flavian propagandist, who has become a major interest for historians. But, as a particular friend of Titus, he makes no mention at all, in his published writings (all of which appeared *after* 79), of the liaison between the latter and Berenice, in spite of providing much information about her, her family and, especially, her brother Julius Agrippa II. On this see Krieger (1997).

CHAPTER 5

The Emperor Domitian

Alessandro Galimberti

1 Domitian prior to 81

Domitian's political career begins with a flight that ends in triumph. In the convulsive days of December 69, when Vitellian and Flavian partisans clashed in Rome, the Capitol went up in flames (see Barzanò 1984; Zecchini 1984). Domitian, just 18 years old at the time, had been left in Rome some three years earlier, when his father Vespasian (who would not return to the city himself until the following autumn) had set out with Titus to put down the Judean revolt (see CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 2). In Vespasian's absence, his older brother Flavius Sabinus, the incumbent urban prefect, served as the de facto Flavian leader in Rome. On December 18 he had erected barricades on the Capitol and placed his supporters behind them; Domitian was summoned and took refuge with him there. The following day the Vitellian forces broke through the Flavian defenses and captured the summit. Sabinus was slain. Domitian found refuge with an *aedituus* (temple keeper) of the Temple of Jupiter and, on December 20, wearing a linen garment, he managed to escape, camouflaged amidst a procession of worshippers of Isis. On the same day, invading Flavian forces took the city; Domitian was acclaimed *Caesar* by the troops and accompanied to his home in triumph. With the subsequent arrival of Mucianus in Rome, Domitian was appointed regent of the city; a few days later he gave a speech to the soldiers, thereby making the situation official (for the reconstruction of these events see Jones 1992, 14–16).

Though the Flavian victory, sealed by the death of Vitellius, had been achieved by Antonius Primus, the credit was initially taken by Mucianus (Tac. *Hist.* 4.1), and later by Domitian. The latter, as can be gleaned from the surviving echoes of propaganda favorable to him, had claimed responsibility for securing the throne – e.g. Suet. *Dom.* 13.1 *et patri et fratri imperium dedisse, illos sibi reddidisse* (he had given the empire to his father and brother, and they had returned it to him) – by defeating and slaying Vitellius (Barzanò

1982a). The poet Statius (*Silv.* 5.3.195–204) preserves the memory of a poem begun by his father, in which Domitian – who inspired the poem and may have completed it as well – appears as *ultor deorum*, that is, as the gods’ avenger of the sacrilegious burning of the Capitol, an outrage imputed to the Vitellians. Closely linked to this is the erection by Domitian, during the principate of Vespasian, of a small shrine dedicated to *Iuppiter Conservator* (Jupiter the Preserver). It contained an altar of marble depicting the events of 69, in which Domitian had enjoyed the protection of Jupiter (Tac. *Hist.* 3.74), through the agency of the aforementioned *aedituus* with whose aid he had been saved. The theme is significant because Vespasian had received his sacred investiture from the Greco-Egyptian god Serapis, and Titus from Venus of Paphos (Barzanò 1983); Domitian, by putting on display his preference for Jupiter, sounds an independent note vis-à-vis his Flavian predecessors, valorizing the god regarded as the one true tutelary deity of the Roman empire, *Jupiter Optimus Maximus* (Jupiter Best and Greatest). As we shall see, promotion of Capitoline religion would be a major element of Domitian’s religious policy.¹

On Domitian’s activity during the principates of his father (69–79) and brother (79–81), we have little information. Both Vespasian and Titus consigned Domitian to political inactivity, his eagerness to play a prominent role notwithstanding. Like his brother Titus, Domitian was given the title *Caesar* (as well as *princeps iuventutis*) on July 1, 69 upon



Fig. 5.1 Domitian, bronze bust. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek inv. 768. Reproduced by permission of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek

Vespasian's assumption of empire. In the same period Domitian was invested with a number of priestly offices (*augur*, *frater arvalis*, *pontifex* and *sacerdos collegiorum omnium*). But our sources for this lengthy span of time tell us more about Domitian's poetic activity than his political role (Plin. *NH praef.* 5; Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.91; Stat. *Ach.* 1.14–16; Sil. *Pun.* 3.618–21). In addition to a “heavenly poem on the Capitoline war” (*Capitolini caelestia carmina belli*, Mart. *Ep.* 5.5.7) he appears to have composed a poem on Titus' conquest of Jerusalem in 70, of which nothing remains (Val. Fl. 1.12–14; see CHAPTER 26, LOST LITERATURE, section 1). Like Augustus, Domitian appears to have forsaken such composition upon becoming emperor.

Domitian did, nonetheless, receive various political assignments at Rome during the reign of Vespasian. On January 1, 70, for instance, he was appointed *praetor urbanus* and invested with consular *imperium* by the senate. A military initiative in Gaul and Germany that Domitian is reported to have set in motion was nipped in the bud by Mucianus, whom Vespasian had charged with overseeing his son's activity. Domitian was obliged to withdraw forthwith to Lyon; on his return to Rome, he chose to reside in the villa in Alba, which would remain his favorite residence throughout his lifetime.

The sources unanimously report the impatience of Domitian, who was sometimes supported and sometimes restrained by Mucianus, along with his inclination to dispense positions and assignments in Rome without consulting his father. In reference to this purported arrogation of authority, Vespasian is reported by Cassius Dio (66.2.3) ironically to have said to Domitian on one occasion “I thank you, my son, for allowing me to continue as emperor, and not yet appointing my successor.” According to Tacitus (*Hist.* 4.52), when rumors about Domitian's presumptuous conduct reached Vespasian, Titus would attempt to intercede on his brother's behalf, but to little effect. Despite these slight tensions, Domitian held the consulship six times prior to 81, albeit only once, in 73, as ordinary consul (and that “by the favor and concession of his brother,” according to Suet. *Dom.* 2.1). As suffect consul in 71 he had the opportunity to participate in the magnificent triumph of Vespasian and Titus for the conquest of Judea. Around 75 Vespasian declined a request for help from the Parthian king Vologaesēs who sought to counter an incursion of the Alani with the aid of a detachment of Roman *auxilia* under the command of either Titus or Domitian. The latter then, according to Suetonius (*Dom.* 2.1) “tried in every way to procure the appointment for himself, and then, when the expedition was deferred, endeavored by gifts and promises to persuade other kings of the East to make a similar request,” but to no avail.

Despite having said that he would make Domitian his *consors* (partner) and *successor* (Suet. *Tit.* 9.3), Titus was careful not to entrust him with any appointment during his brief reign. The sources attribute to Domitian a series of plots against his brother. If authentic, these might have been spurred by the lack of affection between two brothers who barely knew each other, separated as they were by a considerable difference in age and life experience (Jones 1992, 19–20). Certainly, Domitian displayed little concern when his brother fell fatally ill. On September 13, 81, as Titus expired, Domitian, according to the usual practice, went to the Praetorian camp, promised a donative to the soldiers, and was proclaimed emperor (Cass. Dio 66.26.3). After Titus' death, the senate met to decree honors for the deceased emperor and, on the following day, ratified the accession of Domitian by the granting of *imperium* and tribunician power, the titles of *Augustus* and *pater patriae* and the office of *pontifex maximus*.

2 Domitian, the imperial court and the senate

On the psychological level, Domitian the emperor was unquestionably driven by a spirit of vindication vis-à-vis his father and brother who had, perhaps rightly, kept him on the sidelines during their own reigns, restricting him, as we have seen, to comparatively minor roles. But this spirit evidently did not impinge on Domitian's initial appointments or policies. Broad continuities in policy are evident from the outset (Griffin 2000, 58–9). A good example, discussed further below, is the continuation of the granting of the *ius Latii* (Latin right) to Spanish communities, a policy that had been initiated by Vespasian.

No less crucial were the initial continuities in appointments. According to a report in the *Historia Augusta* (SHA *Alex. Sev.* 65.5), Trajan was accustomed to say that Domitian was a bad emperor but he had good *amici* (friends). Suetonius, moreover, in reference to Titus, writes that “he chose excellent friends whom succeeding *principes* continued to hold dear, as being beneficial both to the *princeps* and to the state” (*Tit.* 7.2), suggesting essential continuity between Titus and Domitian.

Many *amici* of Vespasian and Titus enjoyed prominent positions in the senate under Domitian. Likewise at his court, which convened more often in Alba than in Rome, a number of important appointments were held by individuals who had already enjoyed successful careers under Vespasian and then under Titus. In this regard, it suffices to recall the names of Cn. Julius Agricola (whose governorship in Britain began with Vespasian and was completed a few years before the death of Domitian), M. Arrecinus Clemens (consul and city prefect), L. Cesennius Peto (*curator rei publicae*), L. Julius Ursus (praetorian prefect) – even if Arrecinus and Cesennius fell into disgrace and Ursus suffered an interruption of his career, which resumed only with the accession of Trajan; one might think as well of members of Domitian's *consilium* (privy council), effectively portrayed in Juvenal's *Satire* 4: L. Fabricius Veiento, Vibius Crispus, Catullus Messalinus, Pegasus and Cornelius Fuscus. By maintaining in key positions individuals who had already proved themselves under Vespasian and Titus, Domitian preserved essential continuity, ensuring the smooth and efficient functioning of the imperial administrative apparatus. This holds true as well for military appointments, including for example, the assignment of command of operations in Germany to generals already tested by Vespasian and Titus.

Cassius Dio (67.2.1) identifies a turning point, a change for the worse in the principate of Domitian “when he began to cause the ruin of and dispense with the friends of his father and brother.” Dio's assertion summons forth a twofold agenda: to pinpoint the chronology of this putative turning point and, more fundamentally, to chart the deterioration of Domitian's relationships with the imperial court and the senate.

The increasingly poisonous climate of Domitian's reign is evident in the illustrious list of his victims, that is, those who, starting in 82/83, were eliminated: C. Vettulenus Civica Cerealis (proconsul of Asia), M. Acilius Glabrio (consul in 91, exiled and then put to death in 95), L. Elius Lamia Plautius Silvanus, L. Salvius Cocceianus, Mettius Pompusianus, Sallust Lucullus, Q. Junius Arulenus Rusticus, Helvidius Priscus the Younger, T. Flavius Sabinus (cousin of Domitian), Servius Cornelius Salvidienus Orfitus, Titus Clemens Arrecinus (praetorian prefect and *praefectus urbi*), Titus Flavius Clemens, Cornelius Nigrinus, Curiatus Maternus. This roll call of eminent victims suggests that, if we were to attempt, with Cassius Dio, to pinpoint a turn for the worse in Domitian's reign, then, 82/83 would be plausible. But a shift in Domitian's disposition need not

have been as instantaneous and straightforward as Dio suggests. Suetonius likewise affirms that there was a change for the worse in the principate of Domitian, that at a certain point the *princeps* passed from *clementia* to *saevitia* (*Dom.* 10.1); he adds, however, that Domitian became even more cruel “after winning the civil war against Lucius Antonius [Saturninus]” (*Dom.* 10.2), which is to say, after January 89. Since we know that a conspiracy was brutally suppressed in September 87, this suggests a worsening of the situation between 87 and 89.² Even Jones, whose important book-length study (1992) goes some way towards rehabilitation, rightly emphasizes Domitian’s suspicious nature. The proliferation of plots – perhaps imaginary as well as real – as his reign went on clearly had their effect, as the numerous executions and sentences of exile attest. The historical and literary sources (conveniently surveyed by Jones 1992, 28–32) are unanimous in emphasizing the climate of fear that prevailed not only in the senate, but also in Domitian’s court. This is not merely the bias of a hostile tradition: it should not be forgotten that Domitian was ultimately slain by a group of his own courtiers. The impulse for the conspiracy, according to both Suetonius (*Dom.* 15.1) and Cassius Dio (67.14.1–4), should be traced to 95, and connected with the death sentence of Arrecinus Clemens.

The kinds of psychological analysis favored by Cassius Dio and other ancient writers should not preclude a more systematic analysis of the causes driving the downward spiral of Domitian’s principate. In particular, such analysis should not be allowed to obscure an important source of friction between the *princeps* on the one hand and the senate on the other, namely, the adoption of modes and forms that gave expression to Domitian’s autocratic predilections.

That there was a shift towards autocracy by comparison with the principates of Vespasian and Titus is beyond doubt. Domitian, furthermore, did not make a mystery of his desire to strengthen his power. He relied on a relatively small group of senators, and seems to have done little to avoid alienating those outside this “power set.” Pliny the Younger (*Pan.* 62.3–4) attests, in a provocatively schematic fashion, that there were two groups in the senate: the favorites of the emperor and the rest.³ Speaking more broadly, Domitian was unsentimental about the relationship between *princeps* and senate, and was disinclined to maintain a pose of formal respect towards that body, as his father and brother had before him.

That during his reign he was consul 10 times,⁴ that he was accompanied by 24 lictors (rather than the normal 12), that he permitted himself the wearing of triumphal attire in the *curia*, that he was censor for life (Jones 1973c; Buttrey 1975), that in his honor the months of September and October were renamed *Germanicus* and *Domitianus*, that in addition to Titus his niece Julia was deified (along with Flavius Caesar, Domitian’s infant son, who died in 73) and the title *Augusta* was bestowed upon his wife Domitia (following the example of Agrippina and Poppea Sabina), that his birthplace in the Quirinale was converted into the *Templum gentis Flaviae* (Temple of the Flavian *gens*), that, more controversially, he is alleged to have insisted on the appellative *dominus et deus* (Master and God, Suet. *Dom.* 13.2; Cass. Dio 67.13.4; for a skeptical appraisal see Jones 1992, 108–9) – all this speaks to Domitian’s desire to emphasize the uniqueness of his position, in support of a more autocratic manner of rule. Such measures generated tensions with the senatorial aristocracy that lasted for the duration of his reign. Contributing to these tensions was the fact that Domitian, unlike Titus, did not refrain from imposing the death sentence on senators;⁵ the increasing roll of illustrious victims, enumerated above, inevitably poisoned relations between *princeps* and senate.

But it would be wrong to imagine that Domitian acted as a bloodthirsty tyrant throughout his reign, as the hostile senatorial tradition asserts.⁶ A number of his actions were aimed at supporting the senatorial class as a body and particular senators as individuals. Among the former might be mentioned Domitian's prohibition against libel directed at members of the nobility; among the latter his donations to financially embarrassed members of the senatorial and equestrian orders to ensure their respective property qualifications.

3 Foreign policy: Germania, Dacia, Britannia

Domitian was the first emperor to absent himself from Rome for a sizeable portion of his reign in order to conduct foreign policy. In his case this entailed, above all else, directing military campaigns. In these campaigns, as we have seen, he made extensive use of a number of military advisers who were former *amici* of Vespasian.

The reconstruction of Domitian's foreign policy is rendered difficult by the rampant distortion of his actions by hostile sources. Military successes are dismissed as recklessly undertaken, driven by personal ambition, or even as artful manipulations of the facts, whereby victories are magnified or even completely falsified; terms of peace achieved by Domitian are characterized as shameful.

Domitian's foreign policy was oriented towards the empire's European frontiers and directed to those areas where Roman dominion faced genuine threats (Britain was a separate matter). It prepared the ground, especially in Dacia, for the conquests of Trajan. With the exception of the appearance of a "false Nero," supported by the Parthians in 90 (Suet. *Ner.* 57), Domitian's activity in the East simply followed the directives of Vespasian, maintaining the usual vigilance on Armenia and on the Parthians.

The first war fought in his reign was that of 82–83 against the Chatti (Becker 1992; Wolters 2008; for the chronology see Jones 1973a). The Chatti were a Germanic people dwelling between the Cherusci and Ermunduri, behind the Romanized tribes near the Rhine. Domitian's objective was probably to continue on the right bank of the Rhine Vespasian's policy of strengthening border security and of protecting the Romanized Germans in the area of the so-called *Agri Decumates* (Levick 1999, 160–2; Zecchini 2010, 195). Domitian set out for Gaul at the end of 82 under the pretense of carrying out a census and immediately went on the attack. The Roman armies promptly won some victories in 83 and Domitian hastened back to Rome to enjoy the fruits of this success. From Domitian's return until 85 there followed a period of reorganization and pacification, aiming at a consolidation of the victories through the construction of *limes* (fortified boundaries). This proved to be of enduring significance, since it was precisely on the basis established by Domitian that the construction of the *limes Germanicus* (a fortified defensive line running along the frontiers of the provinces of Germania Inferior, Germania Superior and Reatia) would take place, first under Hadrian (perhaps) and then under Antoninus Pius.

The victory was amplified by imperial propaganda in various ways: a triumph was celebrated, Domitian assumed the title *Germanicus* (Conqueror of Germany), and coins were issued bearing the legend *Germania capta* (Germany conquered) or *devictis Germanis* ("the Germans defeated"; on the coins see Holder 1977). Tacitus and Pliny

the Younger regarded all this as fabrication. The former archly remarks that “the Germans were more triumphed over than conquered” (*triumphati magis quam victi sunt*, Tac. *Ger.* 37.5; cf. *Agr.* 39); the latter mocked the emperor’s “sham appearance of victory” (*falsae simulacra victoriae*, Plin. *Pan.* 16.3). But Domitian’s success, though modest, was real enough: he had managed to extend the Roman *limes* near the Elbe. Frontinus, who was probably a member of Domitian’s staff during this campaign puts the distance at about 46 miles (*Str.* 1.3.10 *limitibus per centum viginti milia passuum actis*; see Perl 1981). A “spinoff” of this conflict was the campaign of 89, in which A. Buccius Lappius Maximus established peace after driving the Chatti back beyond the *limes* (Strobel 1987), which in the intervening period they had traversed. After the conflict with the Chatti and the suppression of the revolt of L. Antonius Saturninus in 89, to which the Chatti had offered their support, but the cause of which is unclear (Jones 1974; Syme 1978; Strobel 1986; Jones 1992, 144–9; Griffin 2000, 65–7), Domitian divided Germany into two provinces: Upper and Lower Germany (*Germania Superior* and *Germania Inferior*).

In the winter of 84/85 a Dacian raid in Moesia triggered a conflict that lasted until 86 and involved at least two separate Roman expeditions (Stefan 2005). Domitian participated in the first, in which he saw the defeat of the legate Oppius Sabinus and the crossing of the Danube by the Dacians. Roman reaction was swift: the praetorian prefect Cornelius Fuscus, with the command of at least five legions, promptly drove the Dacians beyond the Danube. After rejecting the peace proposals of the Dacian king Decebalus, a second incursion ended in disaster: Fuscus himself perished in the battle, the Roman camp was taken, and a legionary standard was lost (that of the *v Alaudae*). This resounding defeat did not go unavenged; and beyond the final victory itself, the result of this bloody campaign was the establishment of the first *limes Moesiae* and the division of the province into two: Upper and Lower Moesia (*Moesia Superior* and *Moesia Inferior*).

In 88, operations resumed on the Danube under the command of Tettius Julianus, who achieved an impressive victory at the mountain pass known to the Romans as Tapae (Strobel 1989). Domitian himself came to the theater of military operations in the winter of 89, arriving from the Rhine frontier, where the short-lived rebellion of Lucius Antonius Saturninus had been suppressed. On the Danubian frontier the emperor was promptly confronted by an unexpected danger from the Dacian king Decebalus, who had managed to gain the support of the trans-Danubian Marcomanni, Quadi, and Iazyges. These were unreliable Roman clients who had refused to provide troops for the Dacian war. Domitian, however, managed to conclude a separate peace with Decebalus – which the hostile tradition labeled shameful – and then dealt with his erstwhile allies from Dacian territory. There is, however, scant trace of these operations because when Domitian returned to Rome, around autumn 89, to celebrate a triumph, it was over the Chatti (as allies of Saturninus) and the Dacians. In 92, hostilities with the same trans-Danubian peoples were resumed, with Domitian on hand. The Marcomanni, Quadi, and Iazyges penetrated into Pannonia annihilating a legion, the *xxi Rapax*. Once again Roman recovery was swift: at the beginning of 93, after defeating the Iazyges, Domitian made a definitive return to Rome where he celebrated his Sarmatian triumph.

In Britain Cn. Julius Agricola served as governor from 77 onwards. Agricola had distinguished himself by substantially increasing the territory under Roman control (see CHAPTER 14, FLAVIAN BRITAIN, section 6). In 83, the sixth year of his term – a duration already exceeding the norm for provincial governors under

Domitian – he achieved a spectacular victory over the Caledonians led by the native king Calgacus at Mons Graupius. Tacitus wistfully observes that “if the Caledonians had not been able to flee into the swamps and forests the Britons would have been conclusively defeated with the victory” (*Agr.* 26). The previous year Agricola had reached Ireland and had repeatedly declared that the island could be “conquered and occupied by a single legion and a few auxiliaries” (Tac. *Agr.* 24.3). In the event he did not have the time to complete his conquests, for he was suddenly recalled to Rome by Domitian. Tacitus, who was son-in-law to Agricola, imputes the latter’s recall to Domitian’s envy of his military accomplishments (see Birley 1975); but a more even-handed consideration of the facts points to a very different conclusion. The extraordinary length of Agricola’s mandate has already been noted, but this in itself cannot have been the cause of the recall, particularly if one additional year would have sufficed to consolidate his conquests. A more convincing explanation emerges if the overall military situation in 83/84 is taken into account. Domitian appears to have decided to stake everything on the Rhine–Danube front, as his repeated presence in those theaters of war might suggest (82–83, 85, 86 and 89). This strategic choice necessitated the relocation not only of *vexillationes* (troop detachments), but also of entire legions, from other parts of the empire and a consequent moving back of the border in Roman Britain.⁷ So for the German war of 82–83 a *vexillatio* of *legio IX Hispana* was detached from Britain, and for the Danubian wars a full legion (*II Adiutrix*). This was followed, starting in 87/88, by the dismantling of a number of strongholds in Britain (above all that of Inchtuthil) and the repositioning of the border. The commitment of military assets to the central European front made any further activity in northern Britain impractical and superfluous; for Domitian’s foreign policy objectives, Agricola’s brilliant successes were already more than sufficient. It is, to be sure, possible that the emperor envied the successes of his legate in Britain – successes that threatened to overshadow his own more modest achievements in Germany. But speculation over such personal motivation should not be permitted to obscure the broader strategic goals of Domitian’s foreign policy, whose focus lay between the Rhine and Danube.

4 Religious policy

Domitian’s devotion to the Capitoline cult is in evidence from the inception of the Flavian dynasty. His narrow escape from the Capitol, when it briefly fell to the Vitellians in December 69, has already been mentioned. To commemorate this event, and the vital assistance provided by a temple attendant of Jupiter, Domitian built a chapel dedicated to *Jupiter Conservator*. Upon becoming emperor, he had it enlarged by erecting an imposing temple to *Jupiter Custos*. In addition he undertook the restoration of the great Temple of Capitoline Jupiter after it was damaged by fire in 80. These measures are characteristic of Domitian, who associated himself more closely with Jupiter than had either Vespasian or Titus. Indeed, Domitian strove to fashion himself as ‘warrior and vice regent’ of Jupiter. The association was much in evidence in the Capitoline Games of 86, and the reorganization of the *sodales Flaviales* undertaken by Domitian focused on the cult of Jupiter (Fears 1981, 76–80). The Alban villa, far and away Domitian’s preferred residence, is frequently mentioned in the literary sources (Stat. *Silv.* 2.5.28, 4.2.66; Juv. 4.99–101; Tac. *Agr.* 45.1; Cass. Dio 67.1.2; Suet. *Dom.* 4.4 etc.); the fact that it was the site of the ancient

sanctuary of *Jupiter Latiaris* for the 30 *populi Albenses* (Plin. *NH* 3.69), further strengthened Domitian's connection with the chief deity of the Roman pantheon.

All this suggests that Domitian saw himself as, and wanted to be seen as, the staunch defender of traditional Capitoline religion. Emblematic in this regard was his ordering of the destruction of a memorial that had been built with stones destined for the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (Suet. *Dom.* 8.5). Likewise in the severe measures taken against unchaste Vestals, first in 83 and again in 89, Domitian assumed the role of stern upholder of antique Roman custom. In the first case he granted to three Vestals, sentenced to death for their infidelity, only a choice in the manner of dying. In the second he applied to the Vestal Cornelia and her accomplice Celer the traditional punishment, burying her alive and killing him with rods in the *comitium*; the third accomplice, Valerius Licinianus, since not proven guilty, was merely banished.

In private, Domitian was particularly devoted to the goddess Minerva. Suetonius reports that Domitian "worshipped Minerva to superstitious excess" (*Minervam superstitiose colebat*, *Dom.* 15.3); indeed, it appears that there was a *sacrarium* (shrine) to the goddess in his bedroom, and that he was in the habit of claiming to be her son: according to Philostratus (*VA* 7.4), Domitian prosecuted a magistrate in Tarentum who had omitted to mention in public prayers that the emperor was the goddess' son (see Girard 1981). Shortly before his demise Minerva is said to have appeared to him in a dream, telling him she was no longer able to protect him because Jupiter had disarmed her (Suet. *Dom.* 15.2). His devotion to the goddess' cult also had very clear public aspects: a new legion formed by Domitian was named *l Minervia*; he built a shrine of Minerva near the temple of the deified Augustus and restored the *templum Castorum et Minervae* in Rome; he appointed a special college of priests for the goddess; and, finally, the *Quinquatria*, quinquennial games established by Domitian and held at his Alban villa, were in honor of Minerva. The worship of Minerva figured in Domitian's revival of the Capitoline religion, since she was one of the two goddesses to whom, along with Jupiter, the great temple on the Capitol was dedicated.

At the same time, of course, the *princeps* had to deal with other religions that were growing in prominence at Rome in the Flavian period. With regard to the cult of Isis Domitian, who, it will be recalled, had managed to extricate himself from danger in December 69 by concealing himself amidst worshippers of Isis, continued the broad policy of favor toward Egyptian cults practiced by Vespasian (who was particularly devoted to Serapis) and Titus (who, after the capture of Jerusalem took part in the consecration of the Apis bull at Memphis). Both father and brother had, furthermore, spent the night before their triumph over the Jews in the temple of Isis in Rome (Joseph. *BJ* 7.123). As *princeps*, Domitian had the temple restored, and erected a series of obelisks in the city. It is possible that he proposed the syncretic identification of Jupiter with Serapis and Isis with Minerva (Jones 1992, 101).

Relations with the Jews and the Christians were somewhat more troubled. Domitian evidently regarded the former with a measure of suspicion. The story reported by Suetonius (*Dom.* 12.2) about the harshness with which Domitian treated a Jewish nonagenarian – having him stripped to ascertain whether or not he was circumcised – in order to determine his liability for the *fiscus Iudaicus* (Jewish tax), although trivial in itself, suggests a measure of tension between the emperor and the Jews. But the severity of Domitian in this case should probably be viewed in the specific context of the *fiscus Iudaicus* (Smallwood 1976; Thompson 1982; Goodman 1989 and 2005). Domitian in fact assessed the tax both for

those living according to Jewish customs and those who wished to conceal their Jewish origins. His vigorous collection of the tax should not be mistaken for persecution. There were, I would suggest, at least two compelling reasons for this vigor: a desire to remain faithful to Vespasian's and Titus' greatest success (the Judean War and the subsequent establishment of the *fiscus Iudaicus*), and the opportunity to gain revenue for the imperial coffers at a time when Jewish proselytism was winning adherents.

Domitian's attitude toward Christians is a more controversial subject. In discussing the events of 95, Cassius Dio reports that

... in the same year Domitian murdered many men, among them the consul Flavius Clemens, even though he was his cousin and had married Flavia Domitilla, a relative of the emperor. Both were accused of atheism (ἄθεότης), a charge used to convict many sympathizers of Judaism. Some of these were put to death, others got off with the confiscation of their property. Domitilla was merely banished to Pantelleria. But Glabrio, who had been Trajan's colleague in the consulship [*sc.* in 91], was put to death, having been accused of the same crimes as most of the others, namely of fighting as a gladiator against wild beasts.⁸

Cass. Dio 67.14.1–3

In the view of some scholars, Domitian persecuted Clemens (son of Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian's brother), Domitilla (the wife of Clemens, and daughter of Domitian's sister) and Glabrio as Christians; others believe, with Dio, that they were persecuted as Jews.⁹ The heated and complex debate cannot be aired in full here, but in light of Dio's passage, just quoted, and the testimony of a number of later Christian texts, the possibility of an anti-Christian persecution under Domitian is not out of the question.¹⁰

In any event, it is important to note that at the heart of Dio's report lies an accusation of atheism (ἄθεότης, Latin *impietas*), that is to say, rejection of Roman state religion, connected to charges of *maiestas* (ἀσέβεια, here “disloyalty to the emperor,” *LSJ* s.v.). Regardless of how one interprets the nature of the charges against Flavius Clemens, Flavia Domitilla, and Acilius Glabrio, a crucial aspect is the link between the religious and political aspect of Roman worship that is central to Domitian's conception of such matters. At the root of tension with the Christians was undoubtedly the question of the imperial cult, possibly exacerbated in Domitian's case, by his alleged insistence, mentioned earlier in this chapter, on being addressed as *dominus et deus* (“Master and God”). Whatever the validity of this last claim, Domitian's reign is crucial for its association of the crime of treason (*maiestas*) – that is, a purely political offense – with the crime of impiety (*impietas*). The Roman religious and the political spheres thereby became even more intertwined,¹¹ a state of affairs reflected above all in the figure of the emperor himself. Domitian's principate marks a crucial movement towards, if not an outright anticipation of, the conception of the divinity of the living emperor that would emerge later in Roman history.

5 Imperial government

The most significant innovation introduced by Domitian in the governance of the empire was the increased presence of equestrians in the imperial administrative apparatus. To members of that order were entrusted important secretaryships (*ab epistulis* or secretary of

correspondence; a *patrimonio* or secretary of imperial property; a *rationibus* or secretary of finance) as well as supervision of the collection of *vicesima hereditatum* (inheritance tax). Many of the offices of the *palatium* (palace) that Domitian entrusted to equestrians had under previous emperors been assigned to imperial freedmen. This proclivity for equestrian appointments helped to consolidate the equestrian career structure, and contributed importantly to the broader trend, in evidence for some time, of the transformation of private functionaries of the *princeps* into state officials (Garzetti 1960, 289). The importance of the equestrian order for Domitian is evident in other spheres: he provided more precise regulation for theater seating reserved for equestrians and on one occasion condemned both equestrians and senators on the basis of the *Lex Scantinia* of 149 BCE (which punished pederasty), a law that properly applied only to senators.

Domitian enhanced the powers of the urban prefect, perhaps in part to ensure a powerful authority to enact his will and “protect his back” during his long absences from Rome (Bauman 1996, 78–9). He also imposed strict controls on the powers of consuls and praetors, and limited even more rigorously the power of provincial governors – with the result that Suetonius, his overall hostility notwithstanding, remarked of the governors of his reign that “they never were more moderate and more just” (*Dom.* 8.2). The care lavished upon provincial administration is attested by a series of documents in which Domitian intervenes directly with the governors, providing precise instructions for dealing with local disputes (MW 121, 463, 464, 466, 500 – on which see Pleket 1961, 301–15; Levick 1982, 57–60; Jones 1992, 110–14; Griffin 2000, 76–80). It is also worth noting that Domitian established two new judicial functionaries in the provinces, the *iuridicus provinciae Britanniae*, perhaps established in 84, responsible, along with the *legatus*, for the administration of Britain and, in Hispania Tarraconensis, the *iuridicus per Asturiam et Calleciam*.

Domitian showed particular interest in Greece and Spain. His philhellenism is evident not only in his personal inclination towards Greek culture, but also in such actions as the restoration of the temple of Delphi in 84 (*ILS* 8905) and the enlargement of the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, as well as in the support given to the cults of Asclepius at Pergamum and Demeter at Ephesus. Domitian also took the titles of eponymous *archon* (chief magistrate) in Athens (where his cult was linked to that of *Zeus Eleutherios*), of *strategos* (a military/political leader) in Pergamum, and of *hieromnemon* (a religious official) in Byzantium. In Spain Domitian continued Vespasian’s policy of granting the *ius Latii* (Latin right) to worthy communities (no less than 129 have been counted: see Nony 1986). This activity is documented by the abundant surviving fragments of the statutes of Salpensa, Malaga, and Irni (see CHAPTER 1, SOURCES AND EVIDENCE, section 2; and also Johnson, Coleman-Norton, and Bourne 1961, 153–9; Spitzl 1984; Gonzalez and Crawford 1986).

Domitian’s careful attention to the provinces was no doubt driven in part by his aggressive foreign policy and his internal security concerns, the latter in evidence particularly after the revolt in Germany headed by the legate L. Antonius Saturninus in 89, where, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, following the suppression of the revolt, the two military districts of Upper and Lower Rhine were formed into two separate provinces, *Germania Superior* and *Inferior*, in the same way that Moesia had earlier been divided into *Moesia Inferior* and *Superior*. Both these acts were clearly designed to limit the forces under the control of any single commander.

Closely linked to the administration of the provinces was Domitian's careful and rigorous fiscal policy, which was aimed at maintaining healthy state and imperial coffers (Rogers 1984). He has sometimes been accused of excessive taxation, and the anecdote of his exaction for the *fiscus Iudaicus*, mentioned earlier in this chapter, may be taken as emblematic in this regard. But his meticulous attention to state revenue was in the service of significant expenditures, including an increase in military pay (see CHAPTER 10, THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FLAVIAN RULE, section 3.3), and a lavish building program (Jones 1992, 79–98; Southern 1997, 124–32). In addition to the many edifices restored in Rome, there were numerous new projects, among them a magnificent stadium on the Campus Martius, whose outline is preserved in the modern Piazza Navona, the Forum Transitorium, and the Odeum (see CHAPTER 8, REMAKING ROME, section 3). Following the examples of Augustus in 17 BCE and Claudius in 47 CE, Domitian celebrated “Secular Games” (*Ludi saeculares*) with great splendor in 88, to usher in a new Flavian age (Zecchini 2001, 203).

Domitian was frequently severe in the administration of justice and the supervision of public morals. His assumption of the office of *censor perpetuus* (“censor for life”) in 85 has already been mentioned, as has the strict punishment of Vestal Virgins in 83 and 89. The same sternness is evident in his expulsion of an equestrian from the list of judges for having taken his wife back after accusing her of adultery – despite the fact that the emperor himself had done likewise with Domitia, first divorcing her for adultery and then taking her back (Suet. *Dom.* 3.1, 13.1). In 89, Domitian revived the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, a centerpiece of Augustus' moral legislation, which stipulated severe penalties for adultery. But Domitian's crusade for virtue in the upper orders of Roman society rang hollow for much of the senatorial class, with which relations were increasingly strained. As we have seen, he had many senators put to death, often making use of fellow senators as informers; this practice, along with forced suicide and exile, fueled a climate of growing tension at the apex of Roman society (see CHAPTER 9, THE FLAVIANS AND THE SENATE, section 3.2). The names of senatorial collaborators and informers would be mired in infamy: Mettius Carus, Aquilius Regulus, Fabricius Veiento, Publicius Certus, Valerius Catullus Messalinus and Arrecinus Clemens (Plin. *Epist.* 1.5, 4.7, 4.22, 9.13; Tac. *Agr.* 45; cf. Jones 1973b and 1979, *passim*).

A final aspect of Domitian's administration that deserves mention is his agricultural policy. The lingering problem of the Italian *subseciva* (unallotted parcels of public land) was sensibly resolved by granting to those who were, strictly speaking, illegally occupying them, parcels of land that had not already been reclaimed and sold by Vespasian (Griffin 2000, 71; Laffi 2001; cf. *CIL* 9.5420, an epistle from July 82, in which Domitian settles a dispute between the inhabitants of *Firmum Picenum* and *Falerii*). Rather more remarkable is an edict issued in 92 forbidding the planting of new vineyards in Italy and ordering that vines be torn down in the provinces, leaving no more than half, in order to increase the cultivation of grain crops (Suet. *Dom.* 7.2, 14.2; see CHAPTER 10, THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FLAVIAN RULE, section 3.3; and also Levick 1982, 66–73; Lo Cascio 1999, 518–26; Jones 1992, 77–8). Domitian sought to meet the increasing demand for grain caused by population growth by expanding cultivation both in Italy and in the provinces; at the same time, the measure was intended to favor Italian wine producers, who found themselves under pressure from provincial competition. Beyond the striking nature of the measure itself, one is left with the impression that in

economic matters, as in other areas, Domitian did not hesitate to exercise strong central control, attesting once again to the more autocratic character of his rule vis-à-vis his predecessors.

Conclusion: Domitian the Tyrant?

The last three years of Domitian reign were undoubtedly the darkest. In 93, Agricola died, and Tacitus offered the consolation that, thanks to this timely death, he did not live to see the worst:

non vidit Agricola obsessam curiam et clausum armis senatum et eadem strage tot consularium caedes, tot nobilissimarum feminarum exilia et fuga. (Agricola did not see the senate house besieged by arms, and, in one act of butchery, the killing of so many consular men and the exile and flight of so many noble women.)

Tac. *Agr.* 45.1

While it is not altogether clear what “the senate house besieged by arms” refers to, the killing of ex-consuls and the exile of prominent women are corroborated by both Suetonius (*Dom.* 10.2, discussed earlier in this chapter) and Pliny the Younger (*Epist.* 3.11.3 and 7; 7.19.4). The year 94 saw the executions of the “Stoics” Junius Arulenus Rusticus, Helvidius Priscus the Younger, and Herennius Senecio, as well as other illustrious consulars; 95 saw the death sentences of Flavius Clemens, Flavia Domitilla, and Acilius Glabrio, as discussed earlier. Domitian’s repressive tendencies are likewise evident in the expulsion from Rome and Italy of philosophers and rhetoricians (Epictetus and Dio Chrysostom were among those affected) in 94.

But such actions do not justify a view of Domitian’s entire reign as tyrannical. It should be borne in mind that, as Jones (1992, 196) reminds us, Domitian put to death fewer senators than did Claudius, an emperor viewed much more favorably by posterity. And Tacitus himself, in a famous passage of the *Agricola* (42.4), denounced the undue admiration enjoyed by those senators “made famous by ambitious deaths that were of no benefit to their country” (*in nullum rei publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt*). It is true that the reasons for the convictions of prominent figures are not always easy to understand, and it is tempting to attribute them more to the whims and savage personality of the emperor rather than to rational motivations. But the lack of pertinent information offered by predominantly hostile sources should not lead to hasty conclusions.

Without question, the last years of Domitian’s reign saw worsening relations not only with members of the so-called “ideological opposition,” but also with his closest collaborators. After the death of Flavius Clemens, the praetorian prefects (whose names are not known) were arraigned and the freedman Epaphroditus (secretary *a libellis*) was put to death. At this point, with the connivance of the emperor’s wife Domitia, the new praetorian prefects Petronius Secundus and Norbanus, the *cubicularius* Parthenius and the new secretary *a libellis* Entellus decided to take action. On September 18, 96 Domitian was slain by the hand of the freedman Stefanus. The same day M. Cocceius Nerva was proclaimed emperor and Domitian was subjected to *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory).

Domitian's most fundamental project, which was to strengthen the autocratic aspects of the Principate at the expense of the senatorial aristocracy, failed. Nevertheless, the condemnation of the tradition, whose negative view derives almost exclusively from his treatment of a privileged class representing a minuscule fraction of the total population, should not be allowed to obscure the enduring merits of his principate, which, together with those of his two Flavian predecessors, made important advances in various spheres. One of Domitian's significant achievements was the consolidation of the organizational structure of imperial power. A favorable view can be taken of his foreign policy, fiscal policy, urban planning and, more generally, his administration of the empire. Domitian was not simply a tyrant; he was an emperor who exercised imperial power in a pragmatic and innovative spirit, without neglecting, as shown above all by his religious policy, certain time-honored Roman traditions.

NOTES

- 1 Likewise the valorization of *Latium*, on which see Zecchini (1990).
- 2 Griffin (2000, 60) oscillates between the late 80s (87 or 89) and 93, and insists on the parallelism with Nero.
- 3 Castritius (1969) has argued for the existence of a faction that remained loyal to Titus during the principate of Domitian, led by Julia (daughter of Titus) and Domitia Longina (Domitian's wife); but this is very much in the realm of the hypothetical.
- 4 Although Cass. Dio 67.4.3 speaks of 10 consecutive consulships, Domitian was in fact consul a total of 10 times while emperor (in the years 82–88, 90, 92, 95); to these can be added seven consulships prior to his accession (in the years 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79, 80). See McCrum and Woodhead (1961) 4–10.
- 5 Birley (1962); Jones (1973a); Cass. Dio 67.2.4: "He paid attention neither to the praise lavished upon Titus for having not put to death a single senator, nor to the fact that the senate frequently sought to pass decrees making it unlawful for the emperor to put a senator to death. For the senators, indeed, there was a momentous distinction between him eliminating one or another of them on his own authority and him doing so with the consent of the senate – as if they could offer any resistance or prevent the conviction of anyone!"
- 6 It is perhaps misguided to downplay the connection between hostility towards Domitian and the predominantly senatorial "matrix" of the sources, as does Griffin (2000, 55): "Before seeing what truth can be salvaged about Domitian's reign it is worth making some preliminary points about this hostile tradition. First, it is not a question of senatorial bias, as is often maintained: Juvenal, Martial and Suetonius are as vehement as Pliny, Tacitus and Cassius Dio. Then, it cannot be assumed that hostility towards Domitian had to be generated posthumously by Nerva and Trajan: it is more likely that these emperors saw that their own position would be strengthened by allowing the feelings of hatred that had led to Domitian's assassination to be expressed and used as a subtle form of laudation by comparison." It seems to me that the "ideological" use that Domitian's successors made of the anti-Domitianic historiographical tradition does not undercut the fact that the point of view of this historiography was predominantly senatorial.
- 7 Whence Tacitus' hyperbolic assertion that "Britain was completely subdued and then immediately abandoned" (*Hist.* 1.2). There is no consensus on the location of the Roman frontier in Britain; see, e.g., Jones (1992, 133).
- 8 Griffin (2000, 68) unconvincingly assesses the conviction of Glabrio (as well as that of Epaphroditus) as the product of Domitian's paranoia. Southern (1997, 124–5) likewise insists on Domitian's paranoia. On Domitian's psychology, see, in addition to these studies, Waters (1964).

- 9 Judaism: Frend (1965); Smallwood (1976); Rabello (1980). Christianity: Sordi (1960, 1965, 1979 and 1984); Keresztes (1973 and 1979) (though regarding Flavius Clemens and his wife as Jews); Bengtson (1979, 235–40); Barzanò (1982b) (discussing Plin. *Pan.* 49.8, but cf. *contra* Jones 1992, 221 n. 97). In arguing for the Christian theory, Sordi makes an important distinction between Judaism as licit and Christianity as illicit. A charge of Judaism could be remedied simply by paying the *fiscus Iudaicus*; conviction for Christianity was punishable by execution or exile.
- 10 Cf. Jones (1992, 114–17), concluding that “No convincing evidence exists for a Domitianic persecution of the Christians.”
- 11 The *Templum gentis Flaviae*, built by Domitian between 94 and 95 on the site of his birth, involves a blending of the religious and the dynastic spheres. It constitutes an unprecedented combination of a shrine for Flavian cult and a dynastic mausoleum. See Dąbrowa (1996).

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FURTHER READING

Jones (1992), which played a seminal role in the modern reappraisal of Domitian's principate remains among the best biographies on Domitian himself; Southern (1997) is another useful English-language study. Good general discussions of the principate of Domitian are found in the pertinent pages of Griffin (2000) and Garzetti (1960), the latter in Italian. For a helpful framing of various issues regarding the principate of Domitian, see the essays collected in *Les années Domitien. Actes du Colloque Toulouse, 12–14 Septembre 1992*, edited by Jean-Marie Pailler and Robert Sablayrolles (Toulouse 1994: Pallas XL). On Domitian's relations with the senate, Jones (1979) remains an important study, though largely subsumed by Jones (1992). On the question of Christianity and the treatment of Christians under Domitian, Sordi (1965; 1984) and the pertinent pages of the two articles by Keresztes (1973; 1979) offer a helpful airing of the issues.

CHAPTER 6

Imperial Image-Making

Steven L. Tuck

Introduction

The Flavian dynasty faced formidable challenges at its inception, stemming in no small part from its relative *ignobilitas*. Though it had built powerful networks of support over the course of its remarkable rise, the new dynasty faced problems of plausibility, and in some quarters, of perceived legitimacy. Such problems would have confronted virtually any family not claiming descent from the exalted founders of the Julio-Claudian line, but for the Flavians they were particularly acute. Vespasian had gained power by right of conquest only, and urgently needed to legitimize his status (Waters 1963, 213). When he became emperor in 69 CE, his *gens*, as Suetonius tells us, was “obscure” and lacking *imagines* (“images of ancestors,” *Vesp.* 1.1). The Flavians also lacked a history of the kind of upper-class benefaction that created the social and political networks that bolstered the Julio-Claudians. These weaknesses combined with broader problems – political instability after the Year of the Four Emperors, the damage caused by recent civil war, a depleted treasury – allow us to begin to grasp the extent of the challenges the new imperial family faced.

In fashioning its public image, the new dynasty took the reign of Augustus as its principal paradigm (on Vespasian’s “*imitatio Augusti*,” see Rosso 2009). The circumstantial analogies were clear: a new imperial family had arisen from the chaos of civil war, and was confronted with the broad project of founding a dynasty; there was also a need to consolidate power and to restore the state. Many of Augustus’ programmatic efforts to craft his public image were pertinent and, with little or no adjustment, directly applicable to Vespasian’s situation in the early 70s. Early Flavian image-making utilizes a set of themes that heavily reference those of Augustus in the post-civil war period from 27–17 BCE. In more general terms, the idealization of Augustus and his principate in the early Empire made him *the* paradigm of imperial excellence, whose precedent could be directly appealed to and exploited. This tendency is manifest in the *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*,

which repeatedly refers to the precedent of three “good” Julio-Claudian emperors, with “the deified Augustus” at the head of the list (clauses I, II, VI, VII; for the text, see APPENDIX 4). No less suggestive is the revival of Augustan themes in coin issues, which puts on display Vespasian’s conservatism and “mimetic” recourse to his predecessor in this medium (Rosso 2009, 211). Vespasian’s inclusion of the *nomen* “Caesar” and the *praenomen* “Imperator” in his titular formula harked back to Augustan usage. His closing of the Temple of Janus and his building of the Temple of Peace (discussed later in this chapter) were both gestures modeled on Augustan precedent. Other actions also appear to have drawn inspiration from the same source (Levick 1999, 73). In short, early Flavian image-making emphasized fundamental similarities and continuities with the reign of Augustus. Vespasian was presented not merely as the founder of a new dynasty, but as a new Augustus (cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 9). Not all Julio-Claudian predecessors were so favorably treated, of course. A crucial element of the Flavian “message” lay in the denigration of Nero – or perhaps better, the obliteration of his memory (Darwall-Smith 1996, 253). There was a pointed rejection of the Neronian decisions in public images and building. Claudius, on the other hand, was treated with considerable respect: Vespasian completed a temple to the deified Claudius on the Caelian Hill, a project that seems, in part to have been intended to show him as a legitimate heir to the Julio-Claudians, as well as provide a demonstration of his *pietas*, while at the same time distancing him from Nero. Such differentiated handling of predecessors was a judicious strategy that reinforced perceptions of Flavian legitimacy while implicitly articulating a set of political ideals.

Titus’ image was bound to that of his father for various reasons – their joint Judean campaign and Titus’ political prominence under Vespasian’s reign chief among them. A central aspect of imperial image-making under Vespasian and Titus lay in presenting them as, in the first instance, great warriors and, in the second, deliverers of peace: upon their capable shoulders fell the task of restoring the political, economic, social, and moral orders. Titus’ short reign, moreover, meant that he had little opportunity to develop a carefully differentiated imperial image. One element that Titus could exploit that had not been available to Vespasian was the latter’s postmortem deification. And Titus, like Vespasian, was promptly made *divus* (deified) after his death, so that Domitian enjoyed still more impressive family credentials. In other respects, though, Domitian’s situation was a difficult one. Though his succession was seamless and automatic, he faced an image problem arising from a deficit of “imperial” credentials. Prior to 81 he had been denied the opportunity to prove himself in the political and military spheres. He had been sidelined during the reign of Vespasian, who had deliberately held back his advancement, and had fared little better during his brother’s brief reign. Equally problematic was the tenuous connection to his father and brother’s military glory, upon which the dynasty had been founded. Thus, one of the image-making challenges faced by Domitian upon his unexpectedly early accession was the legacy of his father and brother.

This chapter will explore a number of important themes of Flavian image-making: victory and triumph; peace, restoration, and renewal; dynasty; public benefaction, framed as a reversal of Neronian self-indulgence. A final section will consider the three Flavian emperors as individuals, briefly examining some of the distinctive ways that each fashioned his own public persona within these broader thematic tendencies.

It should be acknowledged from the outset that any such analysis is skewed by the vagaries and unevenness of artifact survival from the ancient world. For the Flavian

period, the modern scholar faces various difficulties, none more vexing than the fragmentary nature of the evidence. The assassination of Domitian was followed by *damnatio memoriae*, that is, a vigorous effort to eliminate his name and image from the Roman public memory. This dealt a severe blow to Flavian public art, with the result that our understanding of many works is necessarily tentative (Flower 2006). For example, a modern inventory of the public sculpture of the Flavian imperial residences (Slavazzi 2007) notes that sculptures of Dionysus and Hercules were placed together in the Aula Regia, Domitian's grand reception hall in the Palatine palace. Although Hercules was associated with Titus and then Domitian, the inclusion of Dionysus is harder to account for in terms of imperial ideology and imagery. As both are sons of the same divine father, they could represent syncretized images of Titus and Domitian (as they would later be used under Septimius Severus for his sons, Caracalla and Geta). Here, however, the sculptures postdate the death of Titus, so that he should be a fully divine figure, rather than merely the son of a god. If Domitian was fashioning an image of his brother as Dionysus to accompany himself as Hercules, it is part of a program that either went no further or that has otherwise not survived. In either case we are left with speculation and a pattern that cannot be extended.

1 Victory and triumph

Military glory was an important asset for any emperor, and came to be increasingly monopolized by the imperial family. After Augustus, the military triumph became the exclusive prerogative of the emperor and the imperial family; Roman generals fought under the auspices of the emperor. The imperial image that was sought was that of an emperor who fought valiantly and effectively for Rome. From the Flavian period onwards, the militarily related qualities of *virtus* (manliness) and *providentia* (providence) are particularly frequent imperial virtues on *denarii* (Heckster 2007, 94).

It is scarcely an exaggeration to state that the Flavian dynasty was “founded on the reputation of the Judean War” (Heckster 2007, 97; on the importance of the Judean War in Flavian image-making, see also Noreña 2003; Millar 2005). The impressive victory monuments – imperial fora and arches – that were highly visible in the city of Rome conveyed the image of the emperor Vespasian and his son Titus fighting successfully for the benefit of Rome and her empire. The magnificent triumph of 71 conveyed the same message.

The insistent and diverse representation of victory and triumph in Rome under Vespasian and Titus served three key purposes. First, it provided a compelling demonstration of the martial *virtus* of Vespasian and Titus, bolstering their personal stature and beginning an articulation of appropriate imperial virtues, a pattern seen across the principate (Noreña 2001). Josephus' account of their triumphal procession (*BJ* 7.120–62, published in 79) emphasizes both its traditional components and its magnificence (see CHAPTER 20, FLAVIAN SPECTACLE, section 3). Second, it diverted attention from the brutal civil war to the far more palatable and successful “foreign” war – so Flavian propaganda fashioned the Judean revolt – that serves to unify the Roman people. This use of “foreign” war followed the example of Augustus, who had fashioned his conflict with Marcus Antonius, supported by Cleopatra, as a defeat of Egypt rather than a civil war between two former members of the Second Triumvirate. The Jewish War, and the fall of Jerusalem in particular, came to be used by Flavians in much the same way that

Actium was exploited by Augustan propaganda (for detailed analysis of “l’imagerie actiaque” on Flavian coinage, see Rosso 2009, 230–8). Third, it served by implication to distinguish the Flavians from Nero whose “triumphs” came from musical contests and games rather than war (Millar 2005, 102).

As noted earlier in this chapter, Domitian’s biggest image-making challenge after his unexpectedly early accession was the legacy of his father and brother. Domitian could not exploit the Judean War as they had, for he had played no role in it. On the other hand, an abrupt shift away from their image-making schemes would have created rifts where continuity was needed. One way in which Domitian created continuity with Vespasian and Titus was by emphasizing his role during the civil war, in which he had figured more directly. But the third Flavian emperor desperately needed to be seen, like his predecessors, as a successful military commander fighting against Rome’s enemies: Domitian needed to make his name in a major external campaign. It was, more fundamentally, important for him to spend time with the army, and to advertise his connection to the soldiery. For Domitian, in short, a measure of military glory such as his father and older brother had already acquired before accession was an urgent desideratum.

In 83, Domitian led forces across the Rhine and attacked the Chatti. This campaign seems not to have been in response to any specific action by the Chatti themselves, who may have been little more than a convenient foe against whom Domitian could establish his credentials as a military leader. At any rate, he won a modest victory, and then returned to Rome to celebrate a lavish triumph. He also took the honorific title “Germanicus,” by which he was frequently addressed by contemporary writers. The epigrammist Martial’s hyperbolic treatment has Domitian’s glory trumping not only Titus’ but even that of Scipio Africanus:

Germany bestowed a nobler [name than “Africanus”] when the Rhine was subjugated; you were worthy of this name, Caesar, even as a boy. Your brother won Idumean triumphs along with your father, but the laurel given for the Chatti is all yours.

Mart. *Ep.* 2.2.3–6, tr. Shackleton Bailey

Domitian’s triumphalism was later ridiculed by his detractors (e.g. Plin. *Pan.* 17), not without justification. His massive and spectacular building program included many victory and triumphal monuments (Gering 2012); in the estimation of Darwall-Smith (1996, 254), “he went further perhaps than any previous emperor, even Gaius and Nero, to glorify himself.” But it should not be forgotten that image-making imperatives were at work here as well as personal vanity. None of the numerous triumphal arches Domitian erected for his military victories have survived, but contemporary reaction to them is recorded by Suetonius: “he raised so many arcades and arches, decorated with chariots and triumphal insignia, in various city districts, that someone scribbled *ARCI* (meaning ‘arches’) on one of them, but used Greek characters” (*Dom.* 13), thereby spelling out the Greek word for ‘Enough!’.

1.1 IVDEA CAPTA coinage

The earliest imagery of the Judean victory that survives is found on the reverses of coins struck under Vespasian beginning in late 69. A denarius dated to 69 (*RIC*², *BMCRE* 35) has an obverse of the laureate head of Vespasian with the caption *IMP CAESAR VESPASIANVS*

AVG and a reverse of a captive Jewish woman seated at the base of a trophy of captured arms, her hands bound in front of her with the caption IVDEA. By the time of the triumph itself the message was more developed. A sestertius of 71 has an obverse with a laureate head of Vespasian and his titles of that year AVG PM TR P PP COS III and a reverse of a standing Jewish man and seated, apparently mourning, Jewish woman, who may be the personification of Judea, under a palm tree and the caption "IVDEA CAPTA.". Variations on the *Judea Capta* types are common in the coins of 71 and are associated with the triumph, serving to preserve the memory and extend the message of that event (Cody 2003). As Hekster (2007, 98) points out, some coin issues showing the personified goddess Victoria inscribing "SPQR" (the Senate and People of Rome) on the shield of victory emphasize that Vespasian and Titus had been fighting for Rome, and to the benefit of the Roman commonwealth.

1.2 Arch of Titus

The most fully preserved and understood imagery of Flavian victory in the Judean war is found on the relief decoration on the Arch of Titus, dedicated in 81. The arch was probably planned as a traditional triumphal arch prior to the death of Titus, but after his premature death in 81 it became a monument that also celebrated his apotheosis. As such, its eventual use incorporated the needs of Domitian for a dynastic monument as well as a victory monument, showing the fungibility of the arch form. The arch was constructed over the Via Sacra on the Velia and, like the Flavian Amphitheater and the Baths of Titus, on the grounds of Nero's *Domus Aurea*, and so extends the assemblage of buildings redirecting that land to public use. The single passageway arch, decorated with a range of sculptural relief, celebrated the entire Flavian dynasty in its original sculptural program, now only partially preserved. On the exterior of the arch the spandrels, keystones, and a frieze make up the figural decoration, all of which reinforces the theme of victory. The spandrels are filled with Victories carrying Roman banners, trophies, laurels, and palms. The figural frieze that originally wrapped around the entire arch just below the attic illustrated the triumph of Vespasian and Titus, using classicizing figures that filled the relief field in very high relief carving. The interior relief work is the best preserved and most critical for the study of the development of Flavian public art (Taisne 1973).

The passageway hosts three large relief panels; one is a square panel in the center of the vault with the apotheosis of Titus as the toga-clad emperor carried upward on the back of an eagle. Each side of the passage has a large horizontally oriented relief panel. The large relief panels in the passage show two scenes from the joint triumph of Vespasian and Titus in 71: Titus in a triumphal chariot (see Fig. 6.1) and the spoils from the war carried in the procession (see Fig. 6.2). The arch thus constitutes an enduring monument to Flavian military victory, as well as Roman imperial dominance more broadly. All those who passed through it would relive, as it were, the magnificent Flavian triumph of 71.

The spoils relief panel displays some of the most recognizable spoils from the Judean War being carried by attendants in tunics in the triumphal procession, each object preceded by a *tabula ansata* (a placard that named the object for the spectators). From



Fig. 6.1 Relief of Titus in triumphal chariot, Arch of Titus, after 81 CE. Photograph by author



Fig. 6.2 Relief of spoils from the Temple in Jerusalem carried in triumphal procession, Arch of Titus, after 81 CE. Photograph by author

the right a table with ritual objects and the menorah, a seven-branched candelabrum, are both identifiable. These were probably selected for the relief as they would have been recognized by the Roman populace from the triumph itself or by their contemporary display in the porticoes of the Templum Pacis complex. The latter is perhaps the most likely as that complex was also on the grounds of the *Domus Aurea* and the self-referential nature of the display would have reinforced the messages of victory, beneficence and dynasty.

An element familiar from Republican historical reliefs and victory monuments is the use of architecture to provide context and the illusion of space, seen here in the archway the procession passes through on the right edge of the panel. The arch is certainly the Arch of Titus itself with a Victory visible in the right-hand spandrel. The frieze above the passage is a dynastic portrait group that almost certainly copied that on the top of the actual arch. Vespasian and Titus each stand in a *quadriga* (four-horse chariot) while Domitian rides a horse, representing how each of them was conveyed in the triumph and ensuring that Domitian, under whom the arch was completed, is included in the group to connect him as closely as possible to his now divine family members. The attendants display Greek sculptural conventions including their elongated proportions, isocephale (the arrangement of figures' heads on the same level), and the use of shallow profile faces on the figures in the background to indicate depth. Many of these elements are familiar from the Triumph of Tiberius on the Boscoreale Cup B.

The chariot panel also shows a scene from the triumphal procession of 71, but here the subject is Titus standing in a *quadriga*, and holding a scepter and palm branch. In addition to the twelve lictors in attendance, various divine figures are also present. Rather than a slave, Victory herself crowns the victorious Titus with a laurel wreath. Virtus, the personification of martial prowess, holds the head of the leading horse while personifications of the senate and people of Rome, each now heavily damaged, flank the chariot to the front and back respectively. The presence of divine figures reinforces the power and significance of the event, while augmenting the status of Titus, who stands as an equal among them. As with the spoils relief, Greek sculptural conventions are used as well, notably isocephale and the use of shallow profiles and offset figures in an attempt to display depth. The overlapping and receding horses notably illustrate a convention found in Greek relief sculpture as early as the sixth century BCE.

1.3 *Equus Domitiani*

Perhaps the best-documented of Domitian's triumphal or victory monuments is a bronze equestrian statue that stood in the Forum Romanum; dedicated in 91, in honor of his victories in Germany, it was described in a poem by Statius (*Silv.* 1.1) and features on coin reverses (see Fig. 8.5). The statue faced east and featured the emperor seated on a striding horse, one of its front hooves resting on a head that personified the Rhine. Domitian was in military dress with *paludamentum* (military cloak) and sword. In his left hand he carried a figure of the goddess Minerva, like a Victory, but lifting the aegis in the face of Rome's enemies. With the exception of the figure of Minerva, Domitian's patron deity, the form of the statue is consistent with traditional Roman equestrian statues. The immediate inspiration was almost certainly the *Equus Caesaris*, a famous equestrian statue of

Julius Caesar in his forum. Caesar's forum was badly damaged by the fire of 80 and subsequently restored by Domitian, with his equestrian statue receiving particular attention. In his description of Domitian's statue, Statius specifically places it in the Forum by its relationship to the Temple of the Deified Julius Caesar and the Forum of Caesar. The systematic parallels with Caesar, the great Roman general who first crossed the Rhine to invade Germany, imply an equivalence that enhances Domitian's martial credentials.

1.4 *Cancellaria reliefs*

The theme of victory, along with that of dynasty, is articulated as well in the Cancellaria reliefs (so named from their discovery beneath the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome in the late 1930s). This pair of marble relief panels, datable to the principate of Domitian, was removed from a building in Rome, probably shortly after Domitian's death. They demonstrate ongoing imperatives of imperial image-making (Koeppel 1984, 29–34) – in particular, the continued importance of military success, of showing the emperor fighting for Rome, and – if the prevailing interpretation is correct – the importance of connecting Domitian visually with Vespasian. The Cancellaria reliefs contain many elements familiar from the Arch of Titus (though their classicizing elements point to an emergent stylistic shift under Domitian). Frieze B appears to feature the *adventus* or ritual return of Vespasian to Rome, with Domitian greeting his father (this is the prevailing view; Wood proposes an alternative reading of the scene in CHAPTER 7, PUBLIC IMAGES OF THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY, section 2). Vespasian stands clad in a toga and facing left near the right edge of the relief; a youthful Domitian, also in a toga, faces him. The other figures in the front rank standing on the ground line are lictors, priests and priestesses, and Roman officials – all mortals whose presence accentuates the rank and importance of the two principals. The figures in the upper rank are all divine. Victory can just be seen hovering behind Vespasian holding a laurel wreath over his head for his success in the Judean War. Behind and flanking Domitian are the personifications of the senate, a bearded mature man to his left, and the people of Rome, a young man to his right. *Virtus* appears on the far left, seated on a throne-like chair. As with the Arch of Titus panels, the representation of the Flavians in the company of divine personifications has an exalting effect, and Vespasian's acceptance by these figures speaks to his own postmortem deification; once again, Domitian benefits from this proximity (Hölscher 2009, 58).

The other Cancellaria relief (Frieze A) depicts Domitian's *profectio* (ritual departure from the city) for a military campaign, perhaps the war against the Chatti (83–84) or, more probably, that against Sarmatians (93–95). Many of the same figures who welcomed Vespasian in the paired relief can be seen escorting the emperor out of Rome, an ingenious touch that reinforces the association of Domitian with his father and his father's earlier military success. Along with the human officials and soldiers, the personification of *Virtus* holds his elbow while personifications of the senate and people of Rome follow. Leading Domitian from the left are Victory, Mars, and Minerva. Again this relief has no architecture or landscape for context, but the figures here are displayed in a single rank with a pronounced isocéphale. Domitian's face as preserved does not reflect his lifetime portraiture: the features are those of his successor, Nerva, and the recutting of the relief demonstrates the reuse of the reliefs after Domitian's death when Nerva was attempting

to affirm his own imperial credentials (see also CHAPTER 7, PUBLIC IMAGES OF THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY, section 2). Nerva's appropriation through the recutting now emphasizes *his* connection to Vespasian and the divine associated figures – an intriguing instance of the legacy of Flavian image-making.

2 Peace, restoration, and renewal

Imperial image-making under Vespasian and Titus focused on presenting them not just as supreme warriors but also deliverers of peace, uniquely endowed with the capacity to restore order and prosperity, to guarantee territorial integrity, to stabilize the political, social and moral orders. Rather shrewdly, Vespasian “was presented as innocent of the atrocities that took place during the civil wars” (Hekster 2007, 97). While the struggle with Vitellius’ forces was pursued in Italy, culminating in the Flavian march on Rome, Vespasian was in Alexandria. Any responsibility on the Flavian side for the bloodshed thus fell to Vespasian’s proxies and subordinates. As Murison well observes, Vespasian was always good at “keeping his hands clean” (see CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 2). In this case, though, it was essential for fashioning his imperial image in the difficult early years.

The coming of peace was advertised on coinage issues (for example, the legend PACIS EVENTVS, “the coming of peace”, on *denarii* dated 69-71: Carradice and Buttrey 2007, 158 nos. 1374–5). In 71, after their triumph for the conquest of Judea, Vespasian and Titus ceremoniously closed the gates of the Temple of Janus, signifying that the empire was at peace. This ceremony formally commemorated the beginning of an era of peace (Levick 1999, 70–1). This gesture, as already noted, followed Augustan precedent (though it is true that more recently Nero had done likewise, after making peace with Parthia in 63). The return of peace was also celebrated by numerous dedications to *Pax Augusta*. Vespasian, moreover, followed Augustus in crafting his discourse and images related to peace. The cult of *pax* almost certainly began with Caesar, but it was especially prominent under Augustus and continued to be important with his successors. But it achieves “its most massive monumental expression in the Temple and Forum of Pax built by Vespasian” (Woolf 1993, 177).

Like Augustus, Vespasian was careful to make victory over a “foreign” opponent in a nominally “foreign” war the ostensible occasion for promoting the cult of *pax*, as well as for closing the doors of the temple of Janus, but as Woolf (1993, 177) notes, “the evocation of civil harmony seems an inescapable sub-text”. The events of 68–70, as the same scholar points out:

... illustrate the violence lying beneath the surface of *pax Romana*. It was not just a matter of rival armies fighting in support of their generals. Inter-city rivalries flared up into armed conflicts and provincials allied with barbarians against other provincials. Every tenet of *pax Romana* was challenged. It is easy to see why the ideology was so vigorously reasserted under Vespasian with the construction of the temple and forum of *Pax*, and those passages of the Elder Pliny’s *Natural History* that forge precarious links between the world of nature and the fragile Flavian peace.

Woolf 1993, 189

The rebuilding of the Capitol, along with the elaborate ceremony that preceded it on June 21, 70, was clearly meant to usher in a new era of peace and harmony under

Vespasian, founder of a new dynasty. Much like the *Pax Augusta*, the peace conferred upon the Roman empire by Vespasian was commemorated in coin issues, and extolled by contemporary poets.

Vespasian delivered peace and with it economic recovery: the success of his policies in restoring the state's finances was crucial (see CHAPTER 10, THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FLAVIAN RULE, section 3.1). The visible evidence of this in Rome was the restoration of damaged buildings and the erection of new ones, all of which was celebrated on coinage with images and the legend *Roma resurgens*. More strikingly still, Vespasianic coinage also revived an Augustan numismatic theme with issues celebrating the "restoration of the republic" (*res publica restituta*; see Rosso 2009).

2.1 *Templum Pacis*

The *Templum Pacis* (Temple of Peace) is a complex best understood as the third of the imperial fora. Paid for by the spoils of the Jewish War, it was deemed by Pliny the Elder to be one of the three most beautiful buildings in Rome; unfortunately it is not well preserved. Construction began in 71, and the complex was dedicated by Vespasian in 75. It was over 10 times the size of Augustus' *Ara Pacis*, from which it clearly drew inspiration (Weinstock 1960), while the overall form of the complex drew upon the previous imperial fora under Caesar and Augustus. Here the major temple was to Pax while the complex contained a library, also an Augustan urban innovation in Rome, and lines of fountains in the open area of the colonnaded square. Like the *Forum Augustum* the *Templum* had a museum aspect. Here it was primarily spoils from Jerusalem taken in the Jewish campaign: the *Templum Pacis* was the principal repository for the booty from the Temple at Jerusalem; in addition, Greek sculpture removed from the *Domus Aurea* was displayed here as both Josephus and Pliny the Elder record. It was also a display house of empire in other respects: the gardens, which featured species of plants from throughout the known world, have been referred to as an instance of "botanical imperialism" (Pollard 2009, 324)

3 Dynasty

From the outset Flavian image-making stressed the connections between family members, striving to depict a close-knit and unified dynasty. Early imperial depictions emphasize not merely Vespasian, but his two sons, and Titus in particular, already proven in war and designated from the outset as imperial successor. Vespasian's two adult sons held out the prospect of a stable succession, which had proven so elusive under the Julio-Claudians. A characteristic expression of this Flavian dynastic discourse is found in the open address to Vespasian in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, which looks forward to Vespasian's postmortem apotheosis, while celebrating Titus' recent conquest of Jerusalem and its poetic memorialization by Domitian:

Your own son [Domitian], holy father, sings of Idume [Judea] overthrown, of his brother [Titus], black with the dust of Solyma [Jerusalem], scattering torches and raging against every tower. He [Titus] will establish divine cult for you and a hundred temples, at that time when, sire, you shine from every part of the heaven.

Val. Fl. 1.13–17, tr. Zissos

As Zissos (2008, 87) notes, the close collocation of “your own son” (Domitian), “holy father” (Vespasian) and “his brother” (Titus) constitutes a subtle affirmation of Flavian dynastic aspirations: the poet “adroitly invokes the conventional dichotomy between the doer and the reporter of deeds to affirm the harmonious versatility of the imperial family.” This distinction between Titus and Domitian was part of Vespasian’s plan from the outset: he actively promoted the principle of succession with Titus, who was considerably older than Domitian. The latter’s political advancement was deliberately held back to avoid any possibility of rivalry; whence Domitian’s early literary compositions, which have unfortunately not survived (see CHAPTER 26, LOST LITERATURE, section 1). Valerius’ panegyric culminates in a vision of Vespasian’s postmortem apotheosis, and the construction of temples in his honor by his imperial successor, Titus. As Zissos (2008, 91) observes, solemnity is afforded by the archaic and poetic word *genitor* (rendered by “sire” in the translation), which “strengthens the presentation of Vespasian as the founder of a new and vital imperial line.” Valerius’ hyperbolic anticipation of temple-building refers to the construction of temples honoring the deified Vespasian – a predictable postmortem honor for a “good” emperor destined to be succeeded by his son. Such dynastic temples were indeed erected following the death of Vespasian in 79, and became an important element of imperial image-making in the reigns of Titus and Domitian. These edifices demonstrated the *pietas* of Vespasian’s sons, while also connecting the sons to their now deified father (and later Titus), thereby reinforcing the notion of a Flavian dynasty.

As already noted, Vespasian’s family background was comparatively humble – problematically so for a claimant to the throne. The same could not be said for either Titus or Domitian after Vespasian’s death: their father’s prompt deification meant that they enjoyed an exalted lineage – and glorification of ancestry promptly became a prominent element of imperial image-making (see also CHAPTER 7, PUBLIC IMAGES OF THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY, section 3). Titus initiated the deification of his long-dead mother Domitilla (a process formally completed early in the reign of Domitian) and commemorated both parents on his coinage (see Fig. 7.1). After the sudden death and prompt deification of Titus, Domitian could add *DIVVS TITVS* (see Fig. 7.3) to the *DIVVS VESPASIANVS* and *DIVA DOMITILLA* coin types. Indeed, Domitian undertook further deifications of deceased family members, including his own son (whose dates of birth, childhood death, and consecration as a god are all unclear), commemorated with the legend *DIVVS CAESAR IMP. DOMITIANI F.*, and his niece Julia (who was Augusta while living, and received cult after her death in 87), commemorated with both *DIVA IVLIA* and *DIVI TITI FILIA* (see Fig. 7.3). Such widespread deification of family members served powerfully to reinforce the public image of a dynasty, as well as to generate both the expectation of, and justification for, hereditary continuity within the imperial family.

3.1 *Templum Vespasiani et Titi*

The earliest Flavian dynastic temple was that originally constructed as the *Templum Divi Vespasiani* in the Forum Romanum. Its location – on the *Clivus Capitolinus* on the west edge of the forum, facing the *Templum Divi Iulii* on the east edge of the forum opposite and flanking a major road (as did the *Templum Divi Augusti* along the south) – was

almost certainly chosen to signal the Flavian dynasty as the successor to the Julio-Claudians. It was begun by Titus as emperor; after his premature death it was completed by Domitian, who rededicated it to include his older brother. The initial dedication to Vespasian, made clear by the extant architrave inscription (*CIL* 6.938), created a space for the worship of the founder of the dynasty. Although its poor condition makes any detailed analysis of the sculptural program difficult, the cult statues may be reflected in those found at the Sacellum of the Augustales at Misenum (de Franciscis 1991; Miniero 2000b) and a section of the entablature frieze survives. It shows in very high relief a series of sacrificial apparatus and implements between bucrania (ox skulls, a common carved decoration). One element of the display is a trefoil mouthed pitcher, an urceus, with two registers of figural decoration. In the upper register a *bestiarius* (professional animal fighter) with a spear faces a lion and a leopard. The lower register has a rhinoceros confronting a bull (Coleman 2006, 105). Both of these scenes mirror events described by Martial in his *Liber Spectaculorum* (11, 26) as components of the inaugural games for the Flavian Amphitheater held under Titus in 80. If those games are the source, the architrave, and probably the rest of the sculptural program, must have been created under Domitian celebrating the joint achievements of Vespasian and Titus – an appropriately “dynastic” theme. This, though, places a lot of analytical weight on a fragmentary frieze.

3.2 *Templum Gentis Flaviae*

Construction of the *Templum Vespasiani* probably started right after his death and was completed after the death of Titus. The *Templum Gentis Flaviae* (Temple of the Flavian Gens), however, is purely a product of the reign of Domitian, whose interests are paramount here (Maggi 2007). Contemporary sources make clear that it was built on the Quirinal hill at the site of the house where Domitian was born. It was conceived as both a Flavian temple and dynastic mausoleum: Domitian had the remains of Vespasian and Titus transferred to it, probably from the Mausoleum of Augustus (Coarelli 2007, 240). Its full form is not known, but it seems to have consisted of a round temple with a domed roof, a form that was rare and suggests that it was perhaps created as a Flavian version of the Mausoleum of Augustus and Pantheon combined, extending the worship of the divine emperors into a new quarter of the city while extolling the *gens Flavia* as a separate dynasty from the Julio-Claudian (Haeckl 1996). The fragmentary sculptural program included at least two identifiable elements: freestanding caryatids that surrounded the temple precinct and large-scale relief panels. The sculptures together reinforce the themes of Flavian *virtus* and *pietas* and dynasty in ways that mirror the Cancelleria reliefs.

The caryatids are unusually male and stand on individual pedestals leaning against the trunks of palm trees, a key element of the iconography of captives from the Judean War. The two known relief panels are also familiar subjects. One is an *adventus* scene of Vespasian entering the city of Rome in 70, flanked by a combination of soldiers and personifications including Victoria and the *genii* of the Senate and People of Rome, as on the Cancelleria relief. The second panel shows a sacrificial procession in front of and ending at the Temple of Quirinus (Hölscher 2009, 53). The selection of the Temple of

Quirinus is in some senses obvious as its location on the Quirinal near the *Templum Gentis Flaviae* associated the two cult sites. It also creates a suggestive parallel to the works of Augustus on the Palatine, his creation of a Temple to Apollo to compete with the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and the association of himself with Romulus through the location of his house. Here on the Quirinal, the Flavian dynasty under Domitian has the elements of a family domicile and a cult site to Quirinus/Romulus. It may be that Domitian was envisioning the redirection of attention and urban development to the Quirinal, a still underdeveloped area at the time. Once here, Romans would encounter the themes of the *Templum Gentis Flaviae*: imperial apotheosis, equality between emperors and deities, and military triumph.

3.3 *Sacellum of the Augustales, Herculaneum*

At a key intersection in the city of Herculaneum was a shrine to the cult of the emperors, the Sacellum of the Augustales, which operated as a cult site for the worship of the deified emperors as well as an outlet for civic beneficence for wealthy freedmen (Wallace-Hadrill 2011). Such cult sites were found in communities across the Roman world and served a social as well as religious function. In the case of Herculaneum, the sacellum closely matched the layout of the shrine dedicated to the cult of the deified Vespasian and Titus at Misenum on the north side of the Bay of Naples. The decoration here, however, is remarkable for what it reveals about styles at the end of the life of Herculaneum as well as about imperial ideology as transmitted and reflected by the local populace. The layout of the sacellum includes a large forecourt with a set of three rooms along one wall. The flanking rooms support cult functions, while the center one was the actual shrine itself. The decoration of the shrine is important because the layout with a single statue base makes it clear that it honored the deified Vespasian, so that it was completed after the death of Vespasian yet prior to the eruption of Vesuvius during Titus' reign, sometime between June and August 79. The floor and walls including the dado were covered with opus sectile, a more expensive marble treatment than mosaic. The lavish use of blue, a rare and expensive pigment, indicates that no expense was spared.

The sidewalls of the shrine are each dominated by a single panel painting with a scene from the life of Hercules, appropriately as the mythical founder of the city, in episodes that are not his canonical labors thus separating him from the traditional Greek portrayals. On the viewer's left is a seated Hercules with Juno and Minerva anticipating his apotheosis and welcome into the company of the gods onto Mount Olympus. On the right is a scene of a standing Hercules armed with his bow and club challenging a river guardian who attempted an abduction of Deianeira (see Fig. 6.3).

The figure of Hercules is the clearest of the two; his features – the broad face and wrinkled forehead, receding hairline, closely set eyes, thick neck and overall stocky proportions – suggest that the model for him was the current emperor, Titus (Fears 2000). The analogy is more than visual: like Hercules, Titus is the mortal son of a god using his rule and power to bring benefits to those on earth with the expectation of his reward of being reunited with his father in the afterlife. This painting of Hercules/Titus, with his apotheosis foreshadowed, flanking a statue of his father, the already divine Vespasian, constitutes a strikingly “Flavian” form of dynastic representation.



Fig. 6.3 Hercules fresco, Sacellum of the Augustales, Herculaneum 79 CE. Photograph by author

3.4 *Temple of the Sebastoi, Ephesus*

The Temple of the Sebastoi in Ephesus is a Roman temple dedicated to the imperial cult of the Flavian dynasty. The word σεβαστός (venerable, august) is the Greek equivalent of the Latin *Augustus*, here probably speaking to deified emperors (*LSJ* s.v.). The placement, design, architectural and sculptural programs, and celebration of the Cult of the Sebastoi at Ephesus all originated in the Greek East, not from the imperial court in Rome (Friesen 1993, 75). This cult, founded under Domitian in 89/90, represents one of the best understood of these spaces for the worship of the Flavians in the Roman world. The grand scale is striking. The excavation of the sanctuary uncovered the head and left forearm of a colossal, acrolithic statue of Titus. The statue was originally about 8 m in height and showed the deified emperor standing and holding a spear, a pose found in Greek classical works. No evidence survives proving whether it was joined by a companion statue of Vespasian, but based on parallels from other colossal groups in Asia as well as other cult sites of the Flavians, this seems almost certain.

3.5 *Apotheosis imagery*

Distinct from the statues of Vespasian and Titus as divine figures are the Domitianic images that show the moment of apotheosis in the funeral of Titus. The notion of

imperial apotheosis began at the funeral of Augustus when an eagle was reportedly spotted flying upward in the smoke of his cremation. By the second century a live eagle was released from the funeral pyre of the dead emperor to reinforce claims for apotheosis. As one walked through the passage of the Arch of Titus, attention shifted from the triumphal panels on the side walls to the large, square figural relief in the top of the vault (Norman 2009). This image shows the apotheosis of Titus as he is carried upward by an eagle. This panel is clearly designed as a posthumous statement by Domitian promoting the Flavian dynasty and redefining the Arch of Titus from a monument purely celebrating the triumph over the Judeans to one that celebrates the triumph over death as well (Pfanner 1983, 98–103).

4 Public benefaction

As already noted, early Flavian image-making involved denigration of the last of the Julio-Claudians, Nero, who served as a convenient foil against which the new dynasty could be positively defined. The Flavian building program in Rome was not just about the erection of structures and the production of physical images; the overall conception of the program was itself part of the Flavian message. The erection of buildings for the public benefit was part of a concerted attempt to project the new dynasty as outstanding public benefactors, the polar opposite of the vain and self-indulgent (so Flavian discourse fashioned him) Nero. As the epigrammist Martial, whose *Liber Spectaculorum* is a poetic tribute to the inaugural games of the Flavian Amphitheater, put it:

[Here] once gleamed the odious halls of a cruel monarch, and in all Rome there stood a single house [i.e. Nero's Golden House]. Where rises before our eyes the august pile of the Amphitheater, was once Nero's lake. Where we admire the warm baths [i.e. the Baths of Titus], a speedy gift, a haughty tract of land had robbed the poor of their dwellings ... Rome has been restored to herself, and under your rule, Caesar, the pleasures that belonged to a master now belong to the people.

Mart. *Spec.* 2.3-11, tr. Shackleton Bailey

The theme of returning Neronian confiscations to the people registers most forcefully with the Flavian Amphitheater, but the principle was trumpeted as well for the *Templum Pacis* (discussed earlier in this chapter). This complex provided an agreeable setting at the heart of the city where the urban populace could enjoy priceless works of Greek art through the *liberalitas* (personal generosity) and cultural patronage of the emperor (Noreña 2003, 27). This reversal of Nero's practice is underlined in a frequently cited comment by Pliny the Elder:

The most famous of all the works [of art] I have discussed are now in Rome, dedicated by the emperor Vespasian in the *Templum Pacis* and in his other buildings. They were carted into the city by the impetuosity of Nero and placed in the sitting rooms of the *Domus Aurea*.

Plin. *NH* 34.84, tr. Noreña

The Flavian Amphitheater or “Colosseum” was the centerpiece of the Flavian building complex on the site of Nero's *Domus Aurea*, and the most striking reversal of projected

Neronian self-indulgence. More than that, this massive edifice was evidently presented as the realization of one of Augustus' dreams (cf. Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1: "[Vespasian] began work on a number of new buildings, [including] an amphitheater in the heart of the city, which he knew Augustus had always meant to erect").

Architecturally the Flavian Amphitheater is complex and sophisticated, particularly in its development of the use of concrete as a structural support for large-scale buildings with immense, unsupported spaces. The construction utilized great concrete piers and vaults allowing for the unprecedented size of the building while also allowing for large tunnels and passageways throughout the substructure of the seating area freeing up space so that the approximately 50 000 spectators could move quickly to and from their seats through the network of tunnels and stairs following the numbers that were on each entrance token. This remarkable structure, which Titus inaugurated in 80 with a series of lavish spectacles that lasted 100 days, was the crowning demonstration of the generous public spirit of the new dynasty.

5 Individualized image-making

This final section will briefly consider some of the distinct elements in the personae projected by each of the Flavian emperors. Most such elements were no doubt "genuine," that is to say, they derived from the character of the emperor in question. Be that as it may, the choice to advertise them, to make them part of the imperial image, was invariably a strategic one, prompted by perceived situational needs.

From the outset Vespasian was presented as an outstanding general who was not aiming for power but was chosen by fate and by Rome's soldiers (Hekster 2007, 97). His public image projected strength of character, common sense, straightforwardness and modesty. In these qualities he resembled the great leaders of the Republican past (*antiquis ducibus par*, Tac. *Hist.* 2.5.1). In spurning the poets who sought to discover a heroic origin for his humble municipal family, he was no doubt following his natural inclinations; but the evident publicizing of this no-nonsense response was a shrewd act of image-making in its own right.

Vespasian's portraiture (see Fig. 3.1), which marks a clear rejection of Julio-Claudian classicism, participates in the generation of this public persona. Instead of the idealized images of the previous dynasty, Vespasian embraces the Republican veristic portraiture, appearing as the 60-year-old ruler he was rather than the eternally youthful figure that Augustus projected. With a balding head, deep labio-nasal grooves, closely set eyes with crow's feet, and wrinkles across his forehead and neck Vespasian bears little resemblance to the Classical ideal. As Wood discusses (see CHAPTER 7, PUBLIC IMAGES OF THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY, section 1), such portraits mark a return to the realism of the Roman Republic, when old age and long public service conferred political authority; they construct an imperial image sharply divergent from that of Nero, who had come to power as a teenager.

It was clearly important for the Flavians (Vespasian and Titus in particular) to demonstrate their *cura* for the people of Rome, of Italy, and of the empire. Part of this was bound up in the institution of *patrocinium*, the extension into public life of the family relationship of the *princeps* to his subjects, which had been so crucial to Augustus (Waters

1963, 200). Titus, of course, had plentiful opportunities to demonstrate his *cura* because of disasters in Italy during his brief reign (see CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 5); but we should not forget the oft-cited anecdote preserved in Suetonius about Titus' eagerness to exercise his generosity (*Tit.* 7.3-8.3).

Domitian chose to fashion his imperial persona in sterner terms, projecting himself as regulator of the social order. This was conveyed most obviously in his being made *censor perpetuus*. His projection of moral uprightness and antique virtue was reinforced by his rejection of lavish eating and drinking habits (*Stat. Silv.* 5.1.120-1; *Mart.* 4.8). Detractors inevitably viewed this as a sham, claiming that Domitian ate frugally in public but extravagantly when alone (*Suet. Dom.* 21; *Plin. Pan.* 49.6). What matters here, of course, is not the authenticity of the image, but the fact that Domitian chose to project it.

A final Domitianic innovation in imperial image-making is worth mentioning. As already noted, Domitian came to power with meager military credentials, and was particularly concerned to demonstrate surpassing *virtus*. In Roman culture this quality was, of course, always most strongly associated with success in battle, celebrated in literature and public monuments. In the first century however, some emperors, notably Caligula and Nero, had begun to explore ways to promote notions of imperial *virtus* that were not exclusively military. Inspired by their personal interests and informed by their philhellenism, these two emperors performed at various times as, for example, gladiator and charioteer.

Domitian appears to have taken up this trend, as seen in the Sacellum of the Augustales, Misenum. The marble statues of Vespasian and Titus found in situ in niches in the interior of the sacellum combine idealized nude bodies with heads reflecting the conventions of veristic portraiture for the first two Flavians with broad faces, wrinkles, close-set eyes and receding hairlines (Miniero 2000). But the statue that commands our attention here is an equestrian bronze that originally stood in the forecourt of the temple (see Fig. 6.4).

The rider is almost completely intact; the horse's head and legs are preserved, enough to accurately reconstruct its pose as rearing. The rider was initially cast as Domitian (the face was subsequently cut away and replaced with one with the features of Nerva). This image has generally been understood as depicting Domitian in battle on a rearing or charging horse with an enemy soldier under the horse's hooves. But this is unlikely for a number of reasons. The horse's flared nostrils, wide eyes and laid back ears show that it is terrified; this is not a normal pose for what would have been a seasoned equestrian mount, and stands in contrast to horses in extant military reliefs. In addition, Domitian is not dressed for battle: his figure never had a helmet, shield or military boots, all integral components of such iconography, and he lacks a sword; neither his spear nor his cuirass are Roman military issue. He wears Roman senatorial shoes as found in civilian reliefs, rather than military boots. The image with its elements of civilian dress, as well as visual associations with Hercules, conforms to the conventions of slightly later hunting imagery. Domitian was known as a skilled hunter who put on public performances and kept a wild animal park, a *paradeisos*, outside Rome for hunting performances, including lion and deer hunts, apparently inspired by the labors of Hercules. The statue should probably be reconstructed as a lion hunt with the emperor thrusting with a spear at the crouching lion under the front hooves of his mount, which, like all horses terrified of large cats, pulls away, held in place by the power of the emperor holding the reins with his left hand. If this reconstruction is correct, the equestrian statue marks an important



Fig. 6.4 Equestrian statue of Domitian (reworked to Nerva), from Misenum, circa 95 CE. Bronze. Baia, Museo Archeologico dei Campi Flegrei nel Castello di Baia, 155743. Photograph by author

milestone in Roman art, constituting the earliest surviving instance of imperial hunting imagery (Tuck 2005). It also offers crucial testimony to the expansion of the presentation of imperial *virtus* from the military sphere into the field of hunting, which, beginning with Hadrian, would become common in the following centuries.

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FURTHER READING

Darwall-Smith (1996) offers a detailed examination of Flavian building projects and their ideological thrust. Magness (2009) provides a survey of Flavian victory monuments at Rome and their meanings. D'Ambra (1993) contextualizes the frieze of the *Forum Transitorium* within Domitian's program of cultural renewal in Rome. Tuck (2005) gives an analysis of the only extant bronze equestrian statue from the Flavian dynasty in the context of contemporary cultural trends.

CHAPTER 7

Public Images of the Flavian Dynasty: Sculpture and Coinage

Susan Wood

Introduction

When Vespasian became emperor in 69 CE, his family, according to Suetonius, was “obscure, to be sure, and without images of ancestors ...” (*Vesp.* 1.1). He does concede that some cities of Asia honored Vespasian’s father Flavius Sabinus with statues inscribed “to an honest tax collector” (*Vesp.* 1.3). But few people in Rome or the area of Rome would probably have recognized Vespasian’s face or family name. One of his immediate tasks, then, as for any new head of state, was to introduce himself and his family to the public. Human beings form visceral opinions of one another as much through visual cues as through speech, as every politician throughout history has understood.

An emperor had efficient means at his disposal to distribute his public images. Since the civil wars of the late Republic, profiles of living men had appeared on coins, which by their nature traveled rapidly, and far. Another, somewhat slower but still effective method of disseminating images was sculpture: Roman bronze foundries and marble carving ateliers could make very faithful replicas of sculptural prototypes. Statues of the emperor and his family were a familiar sight in every Roman city. Painted portraits probably once existed as well, although they rarely survive, due to their perishable nature (Kleiner 2010, 233 fig. 16-4).

Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian all used the portraits of themselves and of their families to shape public perceptions. Their efforts demonstrate both the power of images to manipulate opinion and the limitations that such efforts inevitably encounter.

1 The principate of Vespasian: images of the emperor and his heirs

Vespasian's portraits and those of his two sons portray a distinctive set of family traits that differ dramatically from those of the preceding dynasty. All portraits of the Julio-Claudians had emphasized their family resemblances to Augustus, even when no such blood relationship existed. Julio-Claudian men, according at any rate to their portraits, shared a triangular facial shape with a broad forehead and tapering chin. They had delicate, fine-boned features and small but full-lipped and gracefully shaped mouths. All except Claudius were shown as youthful, despite the fact that both Augustus and Tiberius lived into old age, and all, without exception, were represented with full heads of hair, despite the fact that some were in fact prone to baldness (Suet. *Calig.* 50.1). Portraits of the Flavian men, in contrast, depict their subjects with broad faces, fleshy cheeks and square jaws, bulging forehead muscles, broad mouths, and thick necks. All three also display a tendency to male-pattern baldness. Vespasian, who was 60 at the time of his acclamation, is represented throughout his principate as a balding man with a lined, leathery face and small, squinting eyes with crow's feet and hooded upper lids. His eyebrows, contracted toward the nose and flaring toward the temples, suggest a strong but not harsh personality, as does the firm horizontal of his broad mouth. In profile view, the contours of his face are broken and angular, with a deep notch between the forehead and the hooked nose, a retreating lower lip and sharply jutting chin. The best replicas of his types convey a skillful balance between the *gravitas* befitting a leader and the approachability that marked his temperamental difference from the arrogant Nero.

Some of Vespasian's images appear to show him in middle age, others as a man in his sixties. The former works may follow a private portrait that predated Vespasian's accession to imperial power. One of the finest replicas of the type, however, is an over-life-size head from Ostia. The scale indicates a date after his death and deification (Giuliano 1979, I.1: 279–80 no. 173). The same type appears on his posthumous coins of 82–84 (see Fig. 7.1).



Fig. 7.1 *Aureus* of the deified Vespasian and Domitilla. British Museum, BMCRE 2:312 no. 68. © The Trustees of the British Museum

For images of a deified emperor, a degree of idealization would have been appropriate; sculptors might therefore have revived an earlier type. These portraits depict Vespasian with a fringe of hair at the center of the forehead, obviously the result of a sparse comb-over, and lips that still have fleshy curves. The later portrait type, best represented by the fine head in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (see Fig. 3.1) shows him with taut, thin lips that suggest both ageing and loss of teeth. In these images, the top of his head is completely bald (Johansen 1995, 28–9 no. 3; Poulsen 1974, 40–1 no. 3, plates 5–6).

It has often been noted that Vespasian's portraits demonstrate a return to the realism of the Roman Republic, when old age and long public service conferred political authority (Varner 2004, 119). Portraits of officials from the Republican era were generally unflattering, highly individualized likenesses, with strong emphasis on signs of advancing age. Vespasian, like the statesmen of the Republic, proudly invoked his long and hard-won experience, in pointed contrast to Nero, who had come to power as a boy of 16. But Vespasian's portraits show more than signs of age: they present the weather-beaten face of a hard-working farmer and soldier. The choice was surely a calculated one: Vespasian could have chosen a more idealizing style, but one of his most urgent tasks upon achieving power was to differentiate himself from the last, hated member of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Suetonius tells us that Vespasian always remained unassuming, never attempting to deny his undistinguished origins, and refusing to accept the title *pater patriae* until late in his principate (*Vesp.* 12). He also chose as his primary dwelling the Gardens of Sallust, rather than a residence on the Palatine (Cass. Dio 65.10.4). His unpretentious portraits indicate a lack of personal vanity, while characterizing him as a strong and experienced commander.

At the same time, it was vitally important for Vespasian to present his sons to the public as worthy successors. A point in his favor when the senate accepted him as *princeps* was the fact that he had heirs who could insure political stability for decades to come (Tac. *Hist.* 2.77). Early in his principate, Vespasian responded to the question of who would succeed him with the words "Either my sons or no one" (Cass. Dio 65.12.1). Dynastic succession, therefore, was a recurring theme in Vespasian's coinage, and in this respect, he could profitably follow the precedents established by Augustus, who had likewise created a new dynasty (Ghedini 1986, 301–2). Titus and Domitian therefore received the title *Principes Inventutis* (Leaders of the Youth) in the first year of Vespasian's principate, and appeared on his coins as little full-length figures on horseback (*RIC*² 5–6). The resonance of that image for Romans was powerful: it recalled the image of the gods Castor and Pollux, who according to Roman legend had ridden to the rescue of the Romans in the battle of Lake Regillus, and had been worshiped from then onward as the guardians of Rome's safety and as patrons of the cavalry. By the second year of Vespasian's principate, the young men were appearing not only as full-length figures but in portrait profiles, and by 71 Titus appeared on the obverses of coins struck in his own name (*RIC*² 355). The reverses of his coins repeatedly emphasize Titus' role in the conquest of Judea (*RIC*² 355, 367–71). Domitian received issues of coins in his own name in 72 (*RIC*² 488–94). Although his own military ambitions to that point had been held in check (Suet. *Dom.* 2.1), his reverse types nonetheless associated him with the successes of his father and brother.

Surviving sculptural portraits of Titus and Domitian as young men confirm that they figured in public statuary groups during their father's principate. Their portraits in all media emphasize the family resemblance to their father, in particular the broad face,

rounded forehead, hooked nose, retreating lower lip, jutting chin, and square jaw. Titus had won a major military victory of his own in Judea after Vespasian had left to prosecute the civil war, and upon returning to Rome held near-partnership in power with his father. Many of his extant portraits must date from those years as his father's Caesar, possibly more than survive from his own very brief principate. One such representation of Titus as Caesar is a cuirassed statue from Herculaneum (see Fig. 4.1; Daltrop, Hausmann, and Wegner 1966, 19, 27, 89, plates 10, 22a). This work must of course pre-date the volcanic eruption that destroyed the city on August 24–25, 79. Titus had succeeded his father just two months earlier, probably not sufficient time to commission and erect a statue of the new Augustus. Titus shared his father's tendency to male-pattern baldness: his short-cropped, unruly curls recede sharply at the temples, while the locks at the back of the head are longer but thinner, and combed forward, obviously covering a bald spot on the crown. The statue emphasizes other family resemblances as well: the heavy bone structure, bulging forehead muscle, broad nose, wide mouth, square jaw, and thick neck. Unlike Vespasian, whose lips had shrunk with age, Titus' are not only broad but thick and fleshy, giving his face an almost frog-like appearance. His eyebrows contract toward the bridge of the nose and flare toward the temples, as do his father's, and a fold of skin hoods the upper eyelids. As Vespasian's portraits do, Titus's also impress the viewer as images of a strong leader who is not vain about his appearance.

Domitian, who was only 18 years old when his father became emperor, appears in his earliest portraits with a full shock of hair and broad, round-cheeked face. He has the characteristic Flavian forehead and wide mouth and jaw, but his youthful features are still somewhat unformed. A complicating factor both in identifying and in interpreting these images, however, is the fact that every surviving example appears to have been recut from an earlier portrait of Nero (Varner 2004, 57–61, 248–54; Bergmann and Zanker 1981, 349–60). This common sculptural practice reminds us of an important concern when analyzing any emperor's self-presentation: no public figure can ever entirely control his own image. Vespasian could choose an artist whose style suited his ideological goals when posing for a prototype portrait. Once patronage passed into the hands of others, however, such as the senate in Rome, colleges of Augustales in various cities and governing bodies in the provinces, he lost control over the interpretation of his portrait. The portraits of all three Flavian men display a great range of style and treatment, sometimes, perhaps, due to the varying tastes of their patrons. The practice of recutting older images, however, produces the most noticeable variations.

2 Problems of typology: recut and reused portraits

Nero's megalomaniacal cult of personality, followed by his death and a *de facto* (but not official) *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory), meant that numerous statues of him survived that were no longer wanted. At the same time, sculptors were producing portraits of the new Augustus and his two Caesars as quickly as possible, and needed stone, the more readily available the better (Prusac 2010, 13–15, 37–45; Pollini and Storage 2010). Nero's plump face lent itself well to remodeling into the broad, square-jawed features of the Flavians, although even the best adaptations inevitably distort the faces of their new subjects (Bergmann and Zanker 1981, 318; Pollini 1984). Even some

of Nero's youthful portraits, which did not yet display the bloated cheeks and heavy under-chin of his adult images, served as material for portraits of Vespasian. Replicas that show Vespasian's characteristic forehead, eyes and hairline, but have an oddly narrow lower face, are generally former portraits of Nero at the time of his accession to power. Most of Vespasian's more youthful-looking portraits were probably recut from those of Nero, their idealizing appearance perhaps dictated partly by the age of the previous subject (Varner 2004, 52–5, 240–6). The full, wavy locks of Nero's hair, which grew long down the nape of the neck, usually give away the identity of the original subject, even in the more skillfully altered examples (Pollini and Storage 2010, 32–3).

The reuse of Nero's portraits continued throughout the Flavian period. Several of Titus' portraits also display clear traces of Nero's image (Varner 2004, 55–7, 246–8; Bergmann and Zanker 1981, 375–8). And this practice continued well into the principate of Domitian, many of whose latest portraits still reveal their Julio-Claudian origins (Bergmann and Zanker 1981, 366–70; Prusac 2010, 40). Complicating the issue still further is the fate of Domitian's images after his own assassination and *damnatio memoriae*. His portraits in turn supplied raw material for subsequent portraits of Nerva; in a few cases, portraits that had once represented Nero and later Domitian were recut yet again after Domitian's fall (Varner 2004, 251 no. 2.50 and 263–4 no. 5.13). The portrait of a deposed and disgraced ruler would most commonly be appropriated for his successor, but it could also become the image of an earlier, more respected member of his dynasty, thus rebuking the recent emperor for falling short of their examples, or for failing to respect their memory. A Caligula or Nero, for example might be remade into the deified Augustus or Claudius, just as Domitian's likenesses provided material for images of his deified father and brother (Bucher and Freeman 2010; Pollini and Storage 2010, 29–31 fig. 19a–b; Prusac 2010, 39–40).

Family resemblances between the honored ancestor and his disgraced relative often facilitated a successful transformation. One of the best-known images of Titus, the impressive togate statue in the Vatican, appears to be a pastiche of two earlier works. The body and head were found in close proximity, and evidently belonged together, but the head is a little too large for the torso, suggesting that it had been grafted onto someone else's statue (Varner 2004, 123–4, 261 no. 5.5; Bergmann and Zanker 1981, 379–80 no. 28). The head itself, furthermore, shows signs of having been cut down from an over-life-size portrait of Domitian, whose long locks, combed forward from the back and artfully arranged around the face, are still recognizable. The face of this statue displays fine sculptural workmanship, with few of the awkward deformities and compromises that betray most recut images, perhaps because Domitian's face already resembled his brother's. Even in such successfully reworked portraits, however, any conclusions about the original artistic intent of the prototype must be tentative at best.

Even more daunting is the task of interpreting recut relief sculptures with narrative subjects, as in the case of the Cancelleria reliefs (Prusac 2010, 40–1; Varner 2004, 119–20, 265 no. 5.17; see also CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 1.4). In their present state, Frieze B represents Vespasian facing a young man who has usually been identified as the youthful Domitian. Frieze A portrays Nerva in the emperor's traveling costume – a tunic and a long general's cape (*paludamentum*) – moving in a procession toward the left amid deities and personifications. The head of Nerva is too small for the body, while the hair matches the coiffure of Domitian's latest portrait type

(Pollini and Storage 2010, 23, fig. 16a–b). The Vespasian of Frieze B shows signs of reworking very similar to those of the Nerva, apparently by the same hand (McCann 1972, 251–3). The transformation of the face is more complete, and the proportions less awkward, but the head is still too small for the torso. The traces of Domitian’s characteristic hairstyle in the recut Nerva, combined with the presence of Domitian’s patron goddess Minerva in Frieze A, allow the reliefs to be dated plausibly (although not without dispute) to his principate. The prevailing interpretation of Cancelleria relief A reads the procession as a *profectio* (imperial departure from the city), in which the gods urge on an apparently reluctant Domitian to a military campaign, perhaps the unpopular war against the Chatti of 83–84 (Suet. *Dom.* 6.1; Hanfmann 1975, 109–10 no. 111). The emperor appears to draw back, resisting the sweep of the procession, despite the urging of Minerva and Dea Roma. But the recutting of the emperor’s face moved the profile of the emperor significantly further to the right, and made him appear to jerk his head backward. Before the relief was altered, Domitian may have appeared modest but willing, as his entourage led him not to an unpopular war but back into the city after his later Sarmatian campaign of 93–94 (Ghedini 1986, 292–7).

The young man beside Vespasian in Frieze B differs from portraits of the young Domitian, lacking his characteristic overbite and broad, square jaw. Furthermore, this face shows no signs of reworking; one would have expected the face of the hated and deposed emperor, rather than some other character in the frieze, to be recut first. It was more likely the portrait of Vespasian that replaced Domitian’s image, while the young man was an official who participated with Domitian in some public event or ceremony (Ghedini 1986, 297–300).

Multiple interpretations of both friezes, however, have been proposed and debated, and even their Flavian date has been disputed (McCann 1972, 269–76). The recutting of the images has destroyed, deliberately, their original narrative meaning, leaving us with an enigma instead of the clear political message that their original designers must have intended.

Obviously, the problems introduced into any imperial iconography by the reuse of older sculptures are vexing and often intractable. We must, therefore, rely first and foremost on the sculptures that do not show any such signs of reworking when analyzing Flavian portraiture.

3 The principates of Titus and Domitian: deified predecessors and living dynasts

After the death of Vespasian in 79 and the accession of Titus, a new concern entered imperial imagery: glorification of Flavian ancestry. Titus, unlike his father, now had a revered and deified predecessor whose memory he could invoke to justify his own position. Bronze coins from Titus’ brief principate demonstrate the splendor of Vespasian’s funeral games: the Deified Vespasian’s statue rode around the Circus Maximus in a chariot drawn by four elephants. Titus’ long-dead mother Domitilla, although not yet deified, was honored with a *carpentum*, a mule-drawn wagon that carried her image in the procession (*RIC*² 257–9 and 262–4). Women of the imperial family had been entirely absent from public coinage and sculpture of Vespasian’s principate, since both

his wife and his only daughter had died before the Flavian family's accession to power (Suet. *Vesp.* 3). Vespasian, whose plans for his family focused on the future rather than the past, saw no need for posthumous honors to them. For Titus, on the other hand, two deified parents would surely have been better than one. Because of Domitilla the Elder's humble origins, however, Titus probably thought it unseemly to ask the senate to consecrate her at the same time as Vespasian (Suet. *Vesp.* 3). Titus therefore introduced her to the public with more modest honors, cautiously preparing the way for her consecration. His own early death in 81 left the completion of that process to Domitian. The coins from the early years of Domitian's principate demonstrate that Domitilla received divine honors very soon after his accession to power, probably at the same time as Titus (*RIC*² 146, 157). She now appears on issues in the precious metals, on the obverse of her own issue and also on the reverses of *aurei* that honor her deified husband (see Fig. 7.1). The Roman mint thus pointedly displays the parents of the new emperor as a divine couple.

In my opinion, this *Diva Domitilla* must be the same woman whom Titus earlier honored on his bronze coins, which unambiguously identify her as Domitilla the Elder, wife of Vespasian. The *diva* on Domitian's coins, however, lacks a patronymic that could clearly establish her relationship to Vespasian and Domitian. Were it not for one piece of incomplete and ambiguous literary evidence, there would be no reason to doubt that she was the same woman honored on the *sestertii* of Titus (Wood 2010, 49–51). Statius, however, in his poem praising the great equestrian statue of Domitian in the Roman forum, lists some apparently deified relatives of the emperor, who include a “sister,” but not his mother (*Silv.* 1.1.94–8). This passage has been taken to indicate that Domitilla the Younger, rather than her mother, was deified. Kienast (1989, 145–7) has argued persuasively that the “sister” is in fact Domitian's niece Julia Titi, who had died and been consecrated shortly before Statius composed his poem. Statius would have used the word *soror* here for its convenience in a line of hexameter verse, never intending it to be understood as a genealogically precise term. Nonetheless, the identification of *Diva Domitilla* as Domitian's sister, who had died before 69, remains persistent in standard reference works. The recent second edition of the *Roman Imperial Coinage*, astonishingly, does not even mention the existence of the controversy. Numismatic evidence, however, and Domitian's political need to glorify his origins, argue strongly for Domitilla's identity as his mother.

By worshiping deified imperial figures, Roman citizens could display their allegiance to the living emperor and their implied acceptance of his lawful authority. The shrine of the Augustales at Misenum exemplifies the cult of the Flavian *divi* in a well-preserved context. This small temple complex housed a set of Flavian statues, two of deified figures, a third of the living emperor Domitian (Zevi 2008, 196–202). A pair of slightly over-life-size marble statues represent Vespasian and Titus in heroic nudity, standing in nearly identical poses (Miniero Forte 2000, 36–7 nos. 2a–b). The bodies follow a Classical Greek statuary type of the hero Diomedes, a popular model for portrait statues, perhaps because of its swaggering, aggressive body language. Vespasian and Titus place their left hands on their hips, and extend the right hands, which apparently grasped swords. Their torsos pivot left, away from the weight-bearing legs, suggesting energetic movement, and the faces look upward. This spiraling stance and upward gaze had been very popular for images of rulers and commanders since at least the time of Alexander

the Great. Since the marble legs of the figures require support, a general's cuirass stands at the side of each figure, each decorated with a gorgon's head in relief and the commander's sash tied around the waist. The long general's cape, or *paludamentum*, loops over each figure's left shoulder. The faces faithfully follow the men's lifetime portrait types, but with some softening of the coarse Flavian features, so that the contrast with the muscular, youthful bodies is not too incongruous.

These statues stood in niches of the main shrine-room. Outside, but near the temple podium, stood a bronze statue of Domitian on horseback, about to strike down an enemy (Miniero Forte 2000, 29–34). We see him on a fiery, rearing stallion, his right arm upraised, originally gripping a spear. He wears the general's sash and *paludamentum*, and an even more lavishly ornamented cuirass than those that appear by the sides of the two marble statues. Domitian's bears not only a handsome *gorgoneion* but a relief on the right shoulder flap of the infant Hercules strangling serpents. Domitian, like Hercules, is living up to his divine descent. The deified emperors have accomplished their victories, while Domitian, their living successor, continues their work of pacifying the imperial borders. That, at least, was the intended message of the sculptural assemblage, prior to 96 CE. After Domitian's fall and *damnatio memoriae*, the Augustales dutifully transferred his honors to the new emperor, cutting Domitian's face away from the bronze head of the statue and replacing it, rather awkwardly, with a bronze mask of Nerva (Pollini and Storage 2010, 25 fig. 17). Since Nerva was a senator with no military triumphs to his credit, the portrayal of him as a warrior was an obvious fiction, but it conveyed the intended statement. The Augustales acknowledged the legitimacy of the new princeps, abandoned their allegiance to his predecessor, and transferred imperial honors from the latter to the former. The statues of Titus and Vespasian remained in the niches of the shrine, still possessing divine honor but no longer their power as guarantors of the current emperor's legitimacy.

Domitian's deified mother also appeared in public sculpture, although the contexts are harder to reconstruct than that of the Misenum statues. Her coin portraits allow the identification of her sculptural images, of which a few survive (see Fig. 7.2).

All represent her with a broad, square-jawed face rather like that of her husband and sons. Whether she actually looked like this or whether the artists merely sought to emphasize her family resemblances we cannot be sure. It is quite possible that no reliable portraits of Domitilla survived from her lifetime, and that these "likenesses" were works of pure imagination. The numismatic profiles show a coiffure that was popular at the time of Nero, with large, flat curls lacquered stiffly into place at the sides of her face, while the rest of her hair is drawn back to a queue down the nape of the neck. The best surviving example is a colossal marble now in Copenhagen that was probably once mounted in a shield-like circular frame (Johansen 1995, 40–1 no. 9; Poulsen 1974, 44–45, no. 9, plates. 16–17). The shield-portrait, or *imago clipeata*, was a format typically reserved for revered ancestors (Winkes 1979, 481–4). The rough chisel work at the back of the sculpture indicates that the head was made for attachment to another surface, while the dowel hole just above the nape of the neck indicates how it was fastened into the frame. The bold, simple carving of Domitilla's features and coiffure suggests that viewers would see the image from a distance, probably far above eye level, while the scale suggests that it decorated a public building. We may speculate that it once accompanied a similar *imago clipeata* of Vespasian, so that the emperor's parents would appear as a



Fig. 7.2 Diva Domitilla, marble head, h. 0.61 m. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. 3186. Reproduced by permission of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek

divine couple here as well as in coinage. In short, the obscure family that had once lacked ancestral images could now display portraits of its forebears in the most honorific form possible.

Because Titus died only two years after succeeding his father, portraits of the emperor from his brief principate are difficult to identify. We do not know whether he even posed for a new prototype or whether patrons simply modified and adapted the existing image of Titus as Caesar. The Herculaneum statue, discussed earlier in this chapter, shows the prince with short, unruly curls that recede slightly at the temples. Another group of portraits, best exemplified by coins of 79 CE or later (see Fig. 7.3) and by a marble bust in Schloss Erbach, still show a fringe of short hair above the forehead, but a more orderly arrangement of parallel, curved locks across the forehead (Fittschen 1977, 63–7 no. 21, plates 23, 24.4). The neat row of locks, ending in a pincer pattern at the left temple, recalls images of the Julio-Claudian emperors. Titus' portraits still show the coarse, heavy Flavian features, but by now the memory of Nero had faded, and with it, the stigma on all things Julio-Claudian. A young emperor with a dynastic claim to power could profitably invoke older tradition and history in his images.



Fig. 7.3 *Aureus* of the deified Titus and Julia Titi. British Museum, BMCRE 2:313 no. 69.
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Domitian's mature portraits tend to be somewhat more idealized than those of his older brother, partly because he was a very young man when his family came to power, and partly because later, he was more vain about his appearance. Suetonius records for example that Domitian was sensitive about his baldness, and disliked hearing any reference to his or anyone else's hair loss (*Dom.* 18.2). Significantly, however, the images of him as an adult do show a receding hairline, and an obvious comb-over from the back. As noted earlier in this chapter, his earlier portraits showed a broad face with a low forehead, a shape perhaps dictated by their origin as images of Nero. Those that represent Domitian after 81 show a longer face, higher forehead, and elegantly refined features. Characteristically Flavian traits are still present, of course, since Domitian's claim to power depended strongly on connection to his deified father and brother, but are more subtly rendered than in the portraits of his two predecessors. The most noticeable differences from their images are his longer and slenderer neck and level eyebrows. The fold of skin that hoods the upper eyelids is present, but more subtly modeled than in Vespasian's and Titus' likenesses. His mouth is broad, with a thin, retreating lower lip, but the lips have more gracefully relaxed curves and are not as fleshy as Titus', nor as firmly pursed as Vespasian's. Domitian's best portraits convey a mood of pensive seriousness rather than the toughness and soldier-like energy that pervades the faces of the elder Flavians.

A portrait that probably represents Domitian at or soon after the time of his accession to power is a small bronze bust in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen (see Fig. 5.1; Poulsen 1974, 43–4 no. 8, plates 14–15; Johansen 1995, 38–9, no. 8). Here he, like his brother, wears his hair long in back and combed forward, but appears still to have some short curls along the forehead. A life-size marble bust now in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome exemplifies the portrait type that appears on his coins of 88–89 and later (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 1: 36–7 no. 33, plates 35, 37). This later work shows a higher forehead, and hair with shallower volume. Here it is clear that Domitian has no remaining hair above the forehead, and that the locks framing his face

are long strands combed forward and artfully arranged. The face, however, shows little sign of advancing age compared to the earlier type. Both the Copenhagen and the Rome busts show Domitian's upper body nude. In the former, his bare shoulders and chest rise from a calyx of acanthus leaves, while the marble bust in Rome had only a swatch of drapery over the left shoulder, now missing. This garment may originally have been carved of a separate piece of marble and attached to the rough surface now visible. The back of the head and neck were clearly also attached as a separate piece. Nudity, as a rule, was reserved for portraits of gods or of deceased and deified emperors. Domitian, who was assassinated and his memory condemned, would never have been honored with such images. These busts, then, must portray the living emperor as a semi-divine being. The drapery over the shoulder of the Palazzo dei Conservatori bust might conceivably have been the aegis of his patron goddess Minerva (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 37). This same attribute often appears on his coin images from 84 onward (*RIC*² p. 245, e.g. no. 177).

One more bust that probably portrayed Domitian with nude shoulders and upper torso, turning his head dramatically upward to the right, was found at Ostia. Domitian's wavy hair, combed forward from the back, his broad face, strong cheekbones and angular profile are all unmistakably present, but the bust has been recut, bizarrely, into the likeness of a woman (Calza and Squarciapino 1962, 65 no. 16; Calza 1964, 35 no. 38, plate 22). The second sculptor refashioned the curled tips of Domitian's hair along the temples into small, straggly ringlets, turned the locks over his forehead into a *nodus* of the type worn by Augustan-era women, slimmed down Domitian's muscular neck (leaving visible tool marks) and transformed the back of the neck into a looped queue of braids. The pastiche of older hairstyles indicates that the new subject must be a woman of an earlier generation. Perhaps this was intended as Domitian's deified mother Domitilla, although its coiffure does not resemble those of her better identified likenesses, or perhaps some private citizen's ancestor. The grotesque results of recutting make the new identity harder to ascertain than the original one. Unlike the Copenhagen bronze and the Palazzo dei Conservatori bust, at any rate, this heroic likeness of Domitian did not escape his condemnation.

Suetonius claims that Domitian referred to himself as *dominus et deus* (Master and God), and demanded that statues in his honor on the Capitoline must be made only of precious metals, the traditional medium for divine cult images (*Dom.* 13.2). Cassius Dio confirms his insistence on these titles (67.13.4), and Pliny the Younger attests to the existence of golden statues that were destroyed after Domitian's fall (*Pan.* 52, 4–5). Some of these claims, written after his downfall and death, may be libelous exaggerations. Domitian assuredly did, however, accept from the Senate and People of Rome at least one truly grandiose monument to his own superhuman glory. In 90, a colossal equestrian statue of Domitian was erected in the Roman forum, where its scale must have overwhelmed the surrounding earlier buildings and monuments (Dewar 2008, 71–83). Ironically, every physical trace of this huge statue has vanished, condemned to the melting pot after Domitian's assassination. Even the location of its base, which must have been huge, remains disputed (Thomas 2004). Our principal sources of information about its appearance are a poem by Statius that celebrated the statue's unveiling (*Silv.* 1.1), and a bronze *sestertius* on which the statue appears as a tiny reverse image (*RIC*² 797). Unlike the bronze statue at Misenum, this horse stood in a stately walking

position, three hooves firmly planted, with one foreleg bent to set its hoof on the symbolic image of a defeated enemy (Miniero Forte 2000, 30). Domitian wears his *paludamentum*, cuirass and sword, but extends his right hand in a gesture of clemency, while holding a statue of his patron goddess Minerva in his left. He is no longer at war, and is making his ceremonial return to the capital city. The victory is accomplished; it is time for veneration of the emperor and the goddess who has favored him with her supernatural protection (Suet. *Dom.* 15.3).

4 The imperial household: living women of Domitian's family, 81–96 CE

Three additional members of Domitian's immediate family also figured in the public images of his principate: his niece Julia, daughter of Titus, his wife Domitia Longina, and his son Flavius Caesar, who had died in infancy some years before Domitian's accession to power. Gold and silver coins from between 82 and 84 represent all of these family members, as well as the deified Vespasian, Titus, and Domitilla (see Figs 7.1 and 7.3). These coin issues constituted an elaborately coordinated program to celebrate the family's past and future (Carradice 1983, 17–21). Julia had already appeared on coins and probably in sculpture during her father's brief principate. She had also, as a very young woman, received the title of *Augusta*, the most prestigious rank that a living woman could hold. Earlier *Augustae* had generally been matriarchs of the imperial family such as Livia and Antonia Minor, or at least the mothers of imperial children, like Poppaea. Since Titus had no sons, however, Julia represented his best hope for descendants. Her coin portraits from 79 to 81 display a variety of coiffures, but consistently represent her Flavian features, especially the rounded forehead, short, broad face, and square jaw (*RIC*² 385–98).

Just one surviving work in sculpture, a marble bust now in the Palazzo Altamps in Rome, recognizably matches the features of these coin profiles (see Fig. 7.4). Julia, like her grandmother Domitilla, wears the hair around her face in curls, but this time the mass of hair is fuller, and the curls display their natural texture, rather than being lacquered into stiff ringlets (Giuliano 1983, 32–6 no. 15). They form an aureole around her eyes and forehead, their texture represented by drill channels that contrast elegantly with her smooth and sensitively modeled skin. Behind the fluffy mass of curls, her hair is bound into tiny braids that are drawn back, bound together and woven into a hair-bun high on the back of her head. This coiffure appears on some, although not all of her coin profiles, and reflects the prevailing new fashion. The sculptors of Julia's portrait had a delicate task: to balance her family resemblance to Titus and Vespasian while still conveying the youthful beauty that suggested her fertility. In the Palazzo Altamps portrait, the sculptor succeeds magnificently: the mass of hair above the forehead gives the short, broad face a longer contour approximating a classical oval, and it softens the angular shapes of the Flavian features. Julia shares her father's broad, full lipped mouth, but the sculptor has represented it with graceful curves.

When Domitian became emperor in 81, his wife Domitia Longina also received the title of *Augusta*. For the first time in the history of the empire, therefore, the imperial house had two living *Augustae*, and some rivalry between them was almost inevitable,



Fig. 7.4 Julia Titi, bust in Palazzo Altemps, frontal. Photo © Vanni Archive/Art Resource, New York, ART383341

especially since Domitian had little choice except to continue honoring the earlier Augusta. Julia appears on the reverse of an *aureus* with the obverse likeness of her deified father (see Fig. 7.3), an issue that undoubtedly circulated at the same time as the *aureus* of her deified grandparents Vespasian and Domitilla (see Fig. 7.1; *RIC*² 147). Domitia Longina also received the honor of coins in her own name, some with reverse images of her son, who had been deified soon after Domitian's accession to power (Desnier 1979). The new Augusta probably served as the priestess of her child's cult: an issue of *dupondii* (brass coins) represents Domitia pouring a libation over an altar, with the inscription *DIVI CAESARIS MATER* ("Mother of the Deified Caesar," *RIC*² 136). Domitia, like Julia, thus also enjoys the reflected glory of a *divus*. Even more importantly, these images remind the viewer that she had proven her fertility once and could presumably do so again.

Domitia's sculptural portraits undoubtedly appeared in public places during the same early years of Domitian's principate. Domitia, like Julia, wore her hair in a mass of curls



Fig. 7.5 *Aureus* of Domitia Longina, circa 88–89 CE. British Museum, BMCRE 2:350 no. 24. © The Trustees of the British Museum

over the forehead, but bound into a queue down the nape of the neck rather than in a chignon. Her features are easily distinguishable from Julia's: her face, as represented on coins, is longer, and her nose slightly arched (see Fig 7.5).

At least four sculptural portraits from the early years of Domitian's principate can be fairly easily identified as Domitia Longina by comparison with her coin profiles (Varner 1995, 189–93). Indeed, her images appear to have been more plentiful throughout Domitian's principate than those of Julia, whose sculptural likenesses are scarce and difficult to identify. Provincial coinages also show a strong preference for honors to the wife of the living emperor over those to the daughter of his predecessor: Domitia appears on a total of 117 issues, from 55 minting authorities (*RPC* 347–8, 372). Julia, in contrast, appears on only three issues from two cities. No provincial issues at all acknowledge Julia's death and deification in late 89. Whether rightly or wrongly, provincial authorities clearly felt that it was more advantageous to curry favor with the emperor's wife than with his niece.

The coinage of 82–84 presents a magnificent image of the imperial family, its deified ancestors, its honored living members, and implicitly, its hope for perpetuation. At some point after 84, however, this carefully constructed image collapsed into disarray. First, Julia Titi's husband Flavius Sabinus was executed by Domitian as a dangerous rival for power (Suet. *Dom.* 10.4). Julia herself suffered no loss of prestige from her husband's alleged treason; she was, after all, the daughter of a deified emperor. Sabinus' death did, however, leave her a very eligible widow. Then Domitian and Domitia Longina separated, and Domitian sent his wife into exile in Campania. Historians writing after the fall of the Flavian dynasty gleefully recount gossip that Domitia had an adulterous affair with an actor, that Domitian himself killed the lover in a fit of jealous rage and divorced his wife, but then took her back because of his uxorious weakness (Suet. *Dom.* 3.1; Cass. Dio 67.3.1–2). Ancient sources also allege that Domitian conducted a brazen affair with

his niece Julia Titi, whose death, we are told, resulted from the botched abortion of Domitian's child (Juv. *Sat.* 2.29–33; Plin. *Epist.* 4.11.6–7; *Pan.* 52–3; Suet. *Dom.* 22).

All such lurid tales about a hated ruler, however, especially if written after his fall, must be regarded with skepticism. Not only will the deposed emperor's enemies take their revenge by attacking his memory, but his former supporters, who might suddenly find themselves in danger, will distance themselves from him as emphatically as possible. All these anecdotes about Domitian and the women of his family follow standard patterns of attacks on a ruler's character. Domitian, like Nero, is ridiculed as a weakling dominated by women, and as a hypocrite who enforced the laws against Roman senators that he himself could not follow (Ginsburg 2006, 106–32). The Julian Law Against Adultery (*Lex Iulia de Adulteriis Coercendis*) would have required him to divorce an adulterous wife, but we are told that Domitian's uncontrolled passion for Domitia Longina caused him to take her back. An adulterous affair with his own niece would likewise have revealed him as a hypocrite: he had executed the head Vestal Virgin on charges of unchastity (Plin. *Epist.* 4.11). Sexual relations with a Vestal Virgin were technically *incestum*, the same term for sexual relations with one's own close relatives. Thus, the emperor would have committed the same crime for which he punished others. The story of Julia's death also bears a suspicious similarity to stories told against not only Nero but the Persian king Cambyses and the Corinthian tyrant Periander. All three of them allegedly abused their pregnant wives, causing them to have fatal miscarriages (Mayer 1982). Domitian was away from Rome at the time of Julia's death, but by ordering her to procure an abortion he could bear similar guilt for her death and that of his unborn child.

The truth about Domitian's messy relationships is probably less sensational than Suetonius and Pliny the Younger would have us believe. Domitian probably decided to divorce his ageing wife, who had never produced another child, and to marry the younger Julia. Marriage to his brother's daughter would have been legal, although unusual, because Claudius had legalized such matches in order to marry Agrippina the Younger. Domitian, like Claudius before him, recognized that his niece represented a link with his beloved, deceased brother, and that she offered the possibility of heirs who were Flavian on both sides. Domitia, however, was an extremely wealthy woman of a distinguished family, and probably had many clients and friends from whom she could call in favors. Suetonius quotes Domitian as saying that he recalled his wife in deference to the vehement demands of the public (*efflagitante populo*, *Dom.* 3.1, 13.1; cf. Cass. Dio 67.3.2). The biographer scornfully dismisses this claim as a feeble excuse for Domitian's own lack of manly resolve. If we recall, however, that Nero faced a violent uprising after his divorce of Octavia, Domitian's statement has the ring of truth (Suet. *Ner.* 35.2; Tac. *Ann.* 14.61). As for the causes of Julia's death, it is most unlikely that she could have been pregnant by Domitian, who had been away on military campaign for many months at the time of her death in late 89 (Vinson 1989, 436–7).

After Domitia returned to her husband, the coins of the imperial mint make the best of an embarrassing situation by honoring the two Augustae with scrupulous equality. *Aurei* from about 88–89 represent the two women in almost identical formats on the obverses, and with the peacock of Juno on the reverse (*RIC*² 678–84). The issues differ only in that the peacock on Domitia's reverse stands in profile, with the train folded (see Fig 7.5), while Julia's peacock stands frontally, his train fanned. Domitia's reverse was a revival of a type that had appeared on her earlier coins of 82–84, a choice probably

intended to indicate that she once again enjoyed the same status that she had held before (*RIC*² 150–51). Both women now wear higher crests of curls over the forehead, probably stitched into place from behind, and both bind the hair in back into a tight queue down the nape (Stephens 2008). Sculptural portraits of Domitia Longina that conform to this type are somewhat easier to recognize than those of Julia; again, Domitia seems to have received more public statue dedications than her fellow Augusta (Varner 1995, 194–200). The higher crest of hair in these portraits gives her long face a majestic height further emphasized by the crescent diadem that rises above the mass of curls.

Julia's later portrait type is somewhat more difficult to identify in sculpture, but an exquisite aquamarine intaglio gem in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France unmistakably represents her characteristic Flavian features, with the higher crest of hair (Alexandridis 2004, 174 no. 152 plate 57, fig. 8). Instead of the small hair bun of her earlier sculptural portraits, or the queue that appears on her later coins, she wears a large turban of braids looped around the back of her head. A marble portrait in Solothurn in Switzerland also shows a face very similar to that of Julia's earlier portrait in the Palazzo Altamps, but wearing the coiffure fashionable in the later 80s (Alexandridis 2004, 174 no. 150, plate 32, fig. 1). This work, like the Paris gem, represents her with a coil of hair around the back of the head. The most securely identified late portraits of Julia, however, are posthumous. She appears one more time on an issue of *aurei* from the Roman mint, still wearing the coiffure of her second lifetime portrait type, with the inscription *DIVA IVLIA AVGVSTA*. The reverse represents the funeral car that transported her image at the funeral games in her honor, drawn by a pair of elephants (*RIC*² 718). Two over-life-size heads, one in the Vatican and the other in Copenhagen, probably belonged to cult statues of the new *diva*: they represent Julia's recognizable, broad face with its large, prominent eyes and square jaw (Alexandridis 2004, 173 nos. 147–48, plate 31, figs. 3–4; Johansen 1995, 44–5 no. 11; Poulsen 1974, 46–7 no. 11). The coiffure, however, is that of Aphrodite as she rises from the sea: a mass of wet, serpentine locks piled on top of her head and bound into a knot over her forehead. Julia, who produced no Flavian heirs during her life, has now become assimilated to a goddess of fertility, as well as to the legendary ancestress of the Roman people. Julia thus becomes a symbolic, if not actual, maternal figure: the poet Martial envisions her as a benign fate safeguarding the future of the Flavian dynasty (*Ep.* 6.3). Seven years after her deification, however, that dynasty came to an abrupt end.

Conclusions

The official portraiture of 69–96 presents examples both of remarkable successes and of disastrous failures in the management of public perceptions. Vespasian, faced with the need both to assert the legitimacy of his rule and to differentiate himself from Nero, negotiated that perilous course with great aplomb. His veristic portraits convey strength, experience, and lack of pretension. Titus' coins demonstrate that during his brief principate he began to take imperial imagery in a new direction, celebrating the women who represented the family's past and future. Domitian continued and expanded this use of female images: his coinage celebrates his deified mother, his wife, their deified infant son, and the daughter of his deified brother. However, it was his relationships

with Julia and Domitia Longina that provided his political enemies with fodder for vicious calumny after his death, and possibly during his lifetime as well. The high artistic quality of Domitianic sculpture and coinage is beyond dispute, but these portraits failed to convey the desired message of dignified harmony within the imperial *domus*. Flavian imperial portraiture, then, demonstrates both the value of the visual arts in presenting the ruler's desired persona and its limitations, if control of that public persona slips out of his control.

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CHAPTER 8

Remaking Rome

Andrew B. Gallia

1 The emperors and their city

The rulers of great empires tend to lavish special attention on their capitals. By shaping the fabric of urban life at the center of power, they can advertise the achievements on which their authority is founded, stake out the core values they claim to represent, and generally demonstrate the benefits that accrue from their control over the state. As Suetonius recognized, Augustus was the first to endow Rome with an ornamental splendor that accorded with the majesty of its empire, so much that he rightly could have claimed to have taken over a city of brick and left one of marble (Suet. *Aug.* 28.3; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.9.5). Contemporary scholarship is solid in its embrace of this assessment, with multiple studies demonstrating how Rome was transformed into a vehicle for a new imperial ideology in the Augustan age (Haselberger 2007; Rehak 2006; Favro 2005).

Although no one should doubt the profound impact of monarchy on Rome's monumental and administrative character, a reign-by-reign approach to the study of the city's development under the Caesars imposes certain limitations that need to be acknowledged. Unlike Persepolis or Khanbalikh, Rome was not a new foundation when it became the seat of imperial authority, much less when it fell under monarchical control. As such, the city did not offer a blank canvas upon which a ruler could project a discrete vision of his power. Indeed, Augustus was particularly adept at incorporating existing urban features into his new, marble Rome. For example, he made sure that an ancient thatched hut, touted as the "House of Romulus" (*casa Romuli*), was assiduously maintained on the slope of the Palatine, not far from his own residence and the gleaming temple of Apollo he built next-door (Dion. Hal. *Ant.* 1.79.11). For later emperors, the challenge of dealing with a pre-existing urban landscape encompassed not just monuments hallowed by antiquity, but the interventions of their predecessors as well. Within the richly layered landscape of Imperial Rome, novelty, however significant, would always be seen as part of a continuum.

The greatest drawback to a discussion of Rome's urban development organized according to the reigns of successive emperors is that it may obscure the importance of overlap between them. It was not uncommon for a project conceived under one emperor to be completed by another. The Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum), which was begun during Vespasian's reign but inaugurated by Titus and only fully completed under Domitian, is a classic example. While we can still safely describe this monument as "Flavian," we are on less solid footing with a monumental complex such as the one begun under Domitian but dedicated after his assassination as the Forum of Nerva (Suet. *Dom.* 5). Scholars who emphasize links between the architectonic decoration of this structure and the policies of the emperor in whose reign it originated may choose to promote the late antique nickname "Forum Transitorium," which weakens the association with Nerva, but the fact remains that Nerva's name was inscribed on the temple that stood at the heart of this narrow forum, proclaiming his responsibility for its construction (*CIL* 6.31213: *Imp. Nerva Caesar[ar] ... fecit*). Despite widespread hostility to Domitian's memory, the next regime embraced this monument and, by extension, the messages conveyed in its iconography. Plenty of other monuments, including the grand Forum and Baths of Trajan, were also begun by Domitian and completed after his death, but in these cases it is more difficult to determine how closely the final product reflected an original "Flavian" plan.

Similar problems in demarcating the dynastic boundaries of urban policy exist along the other edge of the period discussed in this volume. As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the Flavian Amphitheater can be viewed as a clear departure from the policies of Nero. And yet, the colossal statue of the sun god that stood on the crest of the nearby Velia, which Hadrian later relocated to a site nearer to the amphitheater (thus providing an etymology for the Colosseum's modern name), suggests a more complicated response to the designs of the previous regime. Commissioned by Nero to stand in the "vestibule" of his enormous Golden House, this 30 m tall bronze figure was seen through to completion by Vespasian, with the only change to its original design being that the god's face would no longer resemble that of an emperor whose "criminality had been condemned" (Plin. *NH* 34.45; see Albertson 2001). As much as the vanity and extravagance of Nero's building projects were disparaged by the Flavians and their adherents, central elements of his grandiose (and self-aggrandizing) vision for a remade Rome were not abandoned.

It is not just monumental invocations of the theory of solar monarchy that persevered. Tacitus provides a lengthy discussion of the rebuilding that followed the great fire of 64, among which the Golden House was simply the most prominent element:

The arrangement of streets was measured off, roads were widened, the height of buildings was restricted, and spaces within them were left open. Porticoes were also added to provide cover along the fronts of tenement blocks ... Such measures were appreciated for their utility and because they brought beauty to the new city. There were some, however, who thought that the old arrangement had been more conducive to health, because the narrowness of the passageways and the height of the buildings had let in less steaming sunlight, whereas now the wide exposed spaces were unprotected by shade and burned with a more onerous heat.

Tac. *Ann.* 15.43.1–5

The historian is unequivocal in ascribing the character of this “new city” (and its supposed consequences for public health) to Nero’s impetus, but the work of rebuilding after such an extensive disaster cannot have been completed by the time of Nero’s death in 68. Suetonius explicitly states that Rome was still disfigured “from old fires and cave-ins” at the start of Vespasian’s reign (*Vesp.* 8.5). He notes some of the steps that the new emperor took to encourage reconstruction, which are not inconsistent with incentives that Tacitus ascribes to Nero (cf. *Ann.* 15.43.2). Even if the primary focus of Vespasian’s efforts went to new projects that had little or no connection with Nero’s plans, it is unlikely that the reforms and regulations that underlay Nero’s *nova urbs* (new city), the impact of which can be seen in remains excavated along the reorganized Sacra Via, were overturned. Such changes to the city’s basic form could not easily be undone.

Further complicating the issue of whether the new Rome that emerged after the fire of 64 should be described “Neronian” or “Flavian” is the fact that Nero’s urban prefect, whose office would have involved him in the application and probably also the formulation of the guidelines that governed the early stages of rebuilding, was none other than T. Flavius Sabinus, Vespasian’s older brother. Of course, Sabinus was killed in 69 amid fighting in the city, but the point remains that there was far more continuity in the institutional framework of the Roman Principate than the changing cast of *principes* might suggest. As natural as it seems to interpret every aspect of Roman policies as a manifestation of the personal idiosyncrasies of the emperor in whose name they were undertaken, it is important to remember that a biographical approach oversimplifies what was often a rather complicated system of agency. Whatever dreams Nero or Vespasian might have had for remaking Rome, the implementation of their visions required the work of many hands. Insofar as the details were left to advisors and technical specialists, a change of ruler need not produce a radical shift in policy.

These caveats help to refine, not but do not contradict, my initial observation about the ideological importance of an emperor’s relationship to his capital. Inscriptions throughout the city announced Vespasian’s responsibility for the rebuilding of temples and restoration of roadways and sacred vineyards (*CIL* 6.936: *refecit*, cf. 934; 931, 933: *restituit*), though sometimes he merely takes credit for seeing to it that the work was done as planned (*ibid.* 939: *faciendum curavit*). Titus made it clear that he regarded the great fire that broke out during his own reign as a personal tragedy, even as he appointed a board of equestrian officials to oversee the rebuilding efforts (Suet. *Tit.* 8.3). Domitian’s reputation as a builder was so great that neither the condemnation of his memory nor the credit-seeking of his successors could obscure his role in a great number of projects, many of which never bore his name (Anderson 1983). Justly or not, the Flavian emperors both claimed and were given personal responsibility for the well-being and physical grandeur of Rome.

The scope and number of monumental building projects undertaken by these emperors clearly reflect the importance of public benefactions in the Flavians’ self-presentation. Upon closer examination, the urban policy of the Flavians also reveals repeated emphasis on particular themes, which we may regard as having special ideological importance in the context of the history of this dynasty. First of all, the city’s renewal was linked in a multitude of ways to the strength of its empire and the military fortunes of the ruling house. This led in turn to a renewed emphasis on the unrivaled authority of the *princeps* and his family, which was increasingly assimilated to that of the gods themselves. In the

end, however, it was the enduring stability of urban institutions and the way that the Flavians' projects merge into a much broader continuum of imperial munificence that formed the most striking feature of their policy.

2 The city and its empire

In addition to the ongoing efforts to rebuild areas affected by the Neronian fire, fate also presented Vespasian with a further, unique opportunity to put his imprint on Rome's urban fabric. The rise of the Flavians brought not just an end to civil wars, but also a need to repair the damage inflicted by those wars. In Rome, the fighting between Vespasian's supporters and the forces of Vitellius that had led to Sabinus' death also caused the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, one of the oldest and most important sites in Roman state cult, to burn to the ground. This catastrophe in particular had a profound impact on the Roman psyche. It is no coincidence that the philosopher Epictetus used the phrase "to burn down the Capitol" as shorthand for the worst crime imaginable (*Disc.* 1.7.32–3, cf. Tac. *Hist.* 3.72.1), or that Civilis' revolt was thought to have been inspired by an interpretation of the fire as an omen that Rome was being abandoned by its gods (Tac. *Hist.* 4.54.2). Accordingly, the restoration of the Capitol was among the first business taken up by the senate after order was restored in the city. Vespasian moved quickly to appoint Julius Vestinus, a former prefect of Egypt, to supervise the project while he remained occupied in the East (Tac. *Hist.* 4.53.1). Upon his return to Rome, the new emperor made a public show of his commitment to the restoration work, deigning to help clear rubble from the site in person (Suet. *Vesp.* 8.5).

Although appropriate emphasis was placed on the actual labor of rebuilding, this project was even more important for the thematic associations provided by the temple itself. Before Vespasian ever returned to Rome, he arranged for the pontifex Plautius Aelianus and the praetor Helvidius Priscus to lead others in a public ritual in which the stone of Terminus, Rome's unmovable god of boundaries, was hauled back into its proper position (Townend 1987). Terminus' presence inside the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was regarded as an integral part of the tradition that identified the Capitolium as the symbolic "head" (*caput*) of the Romans' empire and Jupiter as the guardian of their territorial dominion. These religious associations were underscored by the presence of thousands of bronze plaques, inscribed with the texts of treaties and grants of privileges to allies, which had been set up in the precinct since time immemorial. With the senate's help, Vespasian also made sure that these inscriptions, which Suetonius describes as a beautiful and ancient "instrument of empire" (*Vesp.* 8.5), were reproduced as part of the temple's restoration (Gallia 2012, 77–82).

As for the temple (*aedes*) itself, this was rebuilt on the same footprint, with little alteration to the original plan. Representations of its architectural form appeared on the bronze coinage throughout Vespasian's reign, starting as early as 71 (*RIC IP* 323, and so on: see Fig. 8.1). Though the construction work cannot have been completed so quickly, this was also the year when Titus returned to Rome to join his father in celebrating their triumph for victorious campaigns in Judea. The sacrifices offered in the sacred precinct of the Capitolium (described by Josephus, *BJ* 7.153–7) served to

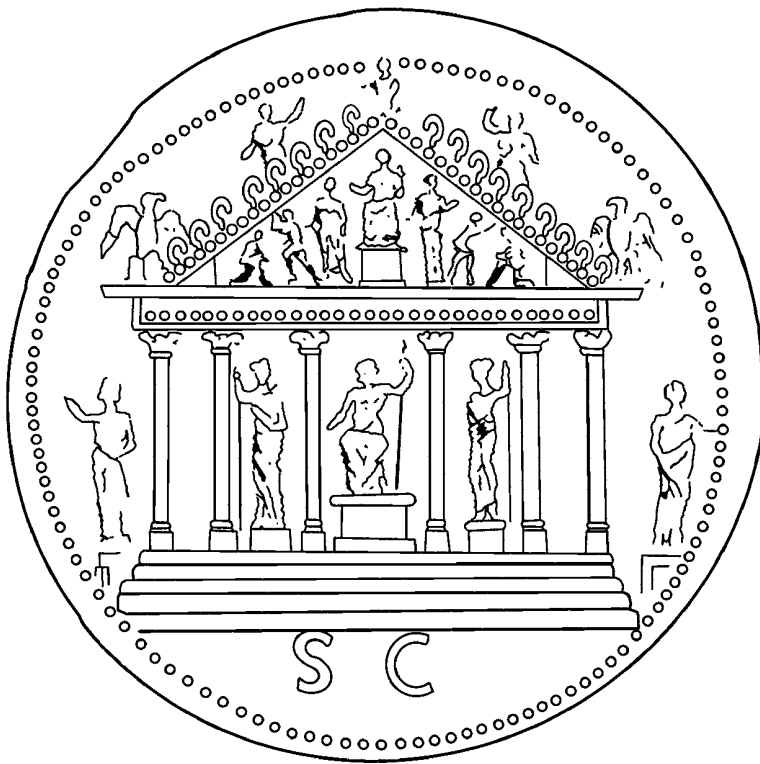


Fig. 8.1 *Sestertius* of Vespasian, 70 CE. Reverse depiction of planned facade for rebuilt temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. *RICII*² 123 no. 886. Drawing after Cohen (1880, 406)

reinforce the link between the Flavians' rebuilding of the temple and the security they had restored to Rome's imperial might. There was a more practical connection as well, because the rebuilding of the Capitulum was paid for by the tax (*fiscus Iudaicus*) that had been imposed on Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (Joseph. *BJ* 7.218).

In fact, most of the changes to Rome's urban fabric under Vespasian and Titus were tied in some way to the glory of their Jewish triumph. After the spoils of Jerusalem had been paraded through the city in the triumphal procession, many of them were put on display in the Temple of Peace, which Vespasian dedicated in 75. This was an enormous public plaza, built over the site of the markets of the old *Macellum*, and its construction was likely part of the ongoing redevelopment of areas left devastated by the Neronian fire. In function and design it marked a departure from the legacy of Nero's Golden House, which Vespasian famously despoiled of works of art in order to put them on display in the colonnades of the new temple precinct and in other public spaces throughout the city (Plin. *NH* 34.84). Moreover, the precinct's alignment and axial layout echoes those of the *Fora* of Augustus and Julius Caesar, which stood opposite, across the thoroughfare of the *Argiletum*. As in other aspects of Flavian policy, the goal seems to have been to associate the new dynasty with praiseworthy members of the Julio-Claudian household while repudiating the degeneracy of its final heir.

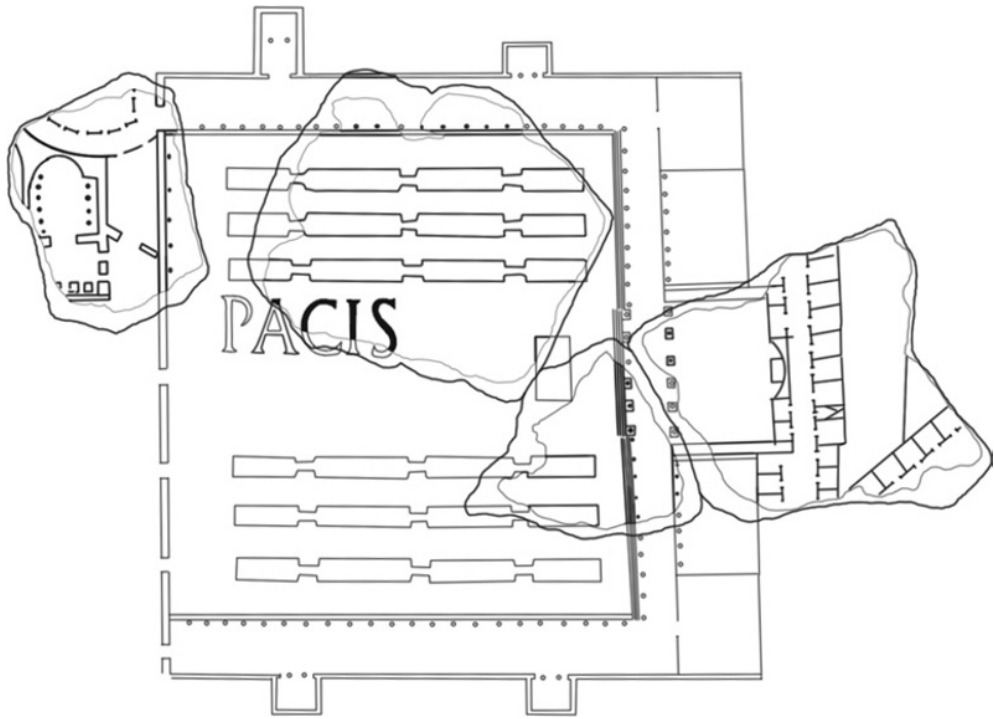


Fig. 8.2 Temple of Peace as depicted in the Severan Marble Plan, third century CE. Drawing after Colini (1937, plate 3)

In this regard, it is significant that the Temple of Peace was, like these earlier Imperial fora, a triumphal monument. It advertised the military valor of its builder, a virtue held in common with Augustus and Caesar, but one not readily associated with the lyre-playing Nero. The dedication of such a monument to Peace may seem incongruous at first blush, but we must keep in mind that *pax*, as the Romans understood it, was commonly achieved through the military subjugation of their enemies (Gruen 1985; Noreña 2003). Of course, this notion of peace presupposed the existence of another, more basic kind of peace, in which Rome (and its legions) could operate without the pernicious distractions of strife and civil war. Just as *Pax* had been a virtue (and a deity) closely associated with the omnipotent Augustus, so too could the Flavians, who almost simultaneously put an end to civil war at home and reasserted Roman military power abroad, lay claim to these twinned legacies of peace.

The confluence of these two valences of *pax* seems to have been nicely encapsulated in the garden plots that stood within the open space of the temple precinct (Lloyd 1982; La Rocca 2001, 201–3; see Fig. 8.2). On one hand, the presence of these plantings (along with elaborate water features and precious works of art) enhanced the complex's function as an appealing space for leisure and relaxation – *pax* in its basic sense. On the other hand, it is both plausible and tempting to interpret this garden as an exercise in “botanical imperialism” (Pollard 2009), which drew together flora from throughout the Mediterranean to show the broad reach of Roman power – *pax* in its more expansive,

martial formulation. As with the restoration of the Capitolium, the Temple of Peace linked the renewal of the urban environment of Rome with the themes of military conquest and the prosperous stability of the empire as a whole.

Similar themes were also on display in the last of the monuments conceived under Vespasian's rule: a new amphitheater, ultimately inaugurated by Titus in 80 with 100 days of elaborate games. The arena offered its own microcosm of Rome's imperial reach, which we find reflected in the poems of Martial's *De Spectaculis*, where both the cosmopolitan makeup of the spectators and the exotic origins of the animals featured in the games are celebrated (*Spect.* 3, 5–22; see Coleman 2006, 38–41). Moreover, the building in which these elements came together was itself a monument to the triumphal glory of the rulers who created it. As seen in contemporary reliefs and coins, one of its entryways took the form of a triumphal arch, complete with a triumphal chariot (*quadriga*) atop its attic (Welch 2007, 136–41; see Fig. 8.3). Added to this visual evidence is Alföldy's compelling reconstruction of the amphitheater's original dedicatory inscription (1995), which confirms that the new amphitheater was built *ex manubiis*, that is, from the generals' share of the loot acquired in the conquest of Judea.

Martial also drew pointed contrast between the public benefit provided by the Flavian Amphitheater and the invidious private grandeur of Nero's Golden House, which had previously occupied this sector of the city ("Rome has been restored to itself," *Spect.* 2.11). While we should be skeptical of the hostile treatment that almost all of Nero's endeavors receive in our sources, it is clear that the Colosseum was meant to represent a deliberate departure from the urban policies of this denigrated predecessor. Whereas Nero evidently felt that the wooden amphitheater he had built in the Campus Martius (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 13.31) was adequate for Rome's needs after the amphitheater of Statilius Taurus was destroyed in the fire of 64, Vespasian undertook to



Fig. 8.3 *Sestertius* of Titus, 80 CE: Obverse: Titus holding laurel branch, seated on curule chair, surrounded by enemy spoils. Reverse: Colosseum, flanked by Meta Sudans and portico of Baths of Titus (?). *RIC II*² 210 no. 184. Drawing after Cohen (1880, 461)

replace the latter structure (and render the former obsolete) with the construction of an enormous stone amphitheater nearer to the heart of the city. As Martial attests and archaeology confirms, the ornamental lake (*stagnum*) that had anchored the sprawling complex of the Golden House was drained so that the massive foundations could be laid for the new amphitheater that would rise in its place. To clear the approach to the site from the west, porticoes that had stood around the edge of Nero's lake were demolished, while the public fountain known as the Meta Sudans was rebuilt on a grand scale (Panella 1990, 75–81; Longfellow 2011, 31–9).

Vespasian and his sons no doubt encouraged the interpretation of these architectural changes as reflections of a fundamental shift in Imperial priorities – away from Nero's self-indulgence and toward a renewed commitment to the common good – but this was more pretext than reality. In all likelihood, most areas of the Golden House (including the ornamental *stagnum* that Vespasian eliminated to make way for the amphitheater) were open to Rome's populace on a regular basis. The difference in the public benefit provided was therefore one of kind, rather than degree. If the Golden House brought the amenities of the elite bucolic villa into the city so that the urban masses might enjoy them, the Colosseum took the favorite pastime of the urban plebs and gave it the imprimatur of high culture (Welch 2002). A series of statues (similar to the Greek masterpieces Vespasian had removed from the Golden House and set up in the Temple of Peace) were displayed in the archways of the upper stories. The interior vaulted passageways that led spectators to their seats were decorated with elaborate stuccoes featuring mythological scenes. And of course, never before had a venue for gladiatorial games occasioned a book of poetry.

Martial also mentions the opulent baths (*thermae*, *Spect.* 2.7) of Titus that overlooked the amphitheater from the Oppian hill, but here the implied contrast with Nero is more tenuous. To be sure, the dedication of these baths was an important public benefaction, but Nero had also built public baths, which stood next to those of his great-grandfather Agrippa in the central Campus Martius (Fagan 1999, 110–12). It is possible, though not proven, that Titus' baths, which appear to match the alignment of the remains of the Oppian wing of the Golden House, were simply the culmination, however modified, of an original Neronian design (Coarelli 2007, 186–7). Understanding the Baths of Titus in this way would explain our sources' astonishment at how quickly they seemed to have been constructed (Mart. *Spect.* 2.7; Suet. *Tit.* 7.3).

Bronze *sestertii* minted to commemorate the inaugural games of 80 show the Colosseum as it would appear after Domitian completed the top level of the facade a few years later (see Fig. 8.3). The amphitheater is flanked by the Meta Sudans on one side and what seems to be the portico that fronted the entrance to the Baths of Titus on the other. It is tempting to read this image as a further statement about the redefinition of the area previously occupied by Nero's Golden House, but the coins themselves obviously make no mention of what these structures were replacing. The more important message may have been the one conveyed by the image on the opposite face of these coins (which was struck as the reverse: Elkins 2006). Here Titus is depicted as the sponsor of the games, seated on a curule chair, surrounded by the arms of defeated enemies. The composition of this scene, which evokes representations of the goddess Roma (cf. *RIC IP* 209 no. 163), suggests the extent to which the emperor's munificence within the city was linked to his ability to maintain the outward projection of Rome's imperial might.

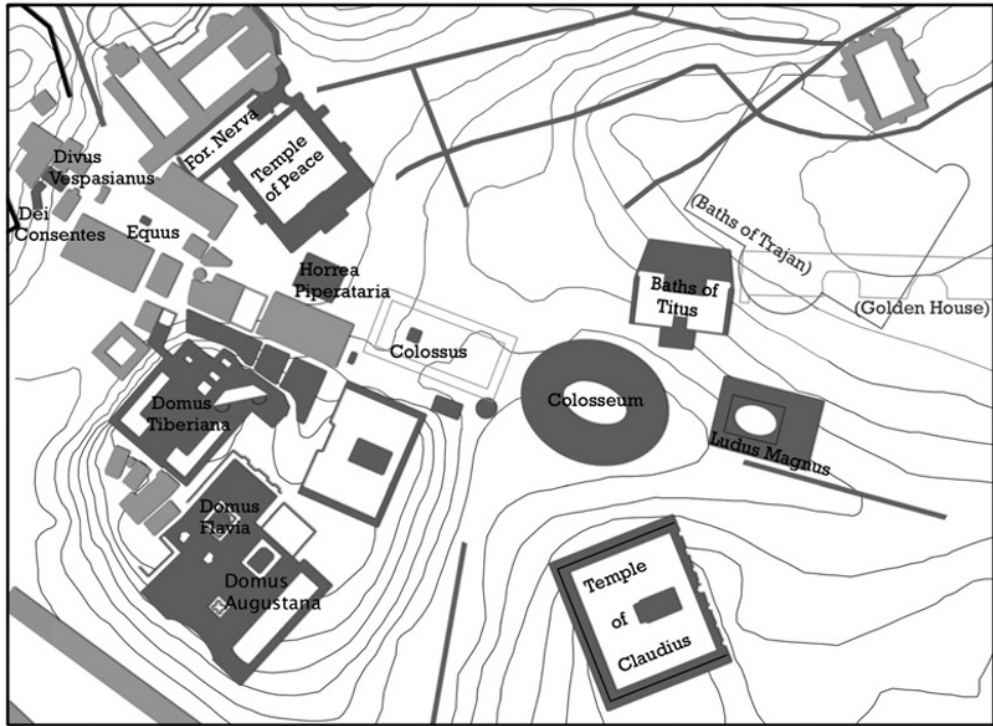


Fig. 8.4 Map of Colosseum valley and surrounding hills

3 The city and its gods

In the same year that Titus opened the Colosseum, Rome burned once more. As had happened after the Neronian fire, catastrophe quickly gave way to renewal, and destruction opened up large swathes of the city (particularly in the Campus Martius) to redesign. These opportunities were not lost on Titus' successor Domitian, who pursued a program of public building that far surpassed anything undertaken by his father or brother. Even at such a remove, Domitian continued to present this work as part of a continuing Flavian effort to restore Rome to its pre-Neronian salubrity. In 83, he established a series of sacred precincts throughout the city in areas that had been left vacant "in order to prevent fires" (*CIL* 6.826, 30837: *incendiorum arcendorum causa*) ever since the city burned for nine days in the age of Nero. Altars were set up in these precincts where prayers would be offered during the Vulcanalia, presumably with the same preventive purpose. Remarkably, the inscriptions set up in these precincts omit any reference to the fire of 80, reflecting a deep-seated unwillingness to acknowledge the extent to which this more recent calamity might have set back the ongoing project of Flavian renewal.

Most obviously, the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which Vespasian had rededicated only a few years earlier, was destroyed and had to be rebuilt again. In this second Flavian restoration of the Capitol, new themes begin to emerge. If the meaning Vespasian ascribed to the Capitolium was best expressed in the triumphal procession that concluded

there, Domitian marked his rebuilding with the revival of the Capitoline Games as a Greek-style quadrennial festival of athletic and literary competitions, over which he presided in the guise of Jupiter/J Zeus (Suet. *Dom.* 4.4; Coleman 1986, 3097–100). The dynasty's connection with a "Jovian ideology" of power centered on the Capitol (cf. Fears 1981) was no longer mediated by the amorphous but traditional theme of imperial triumph; it was now predicated on a more direct relationship (and implied equivalence) between the emperor and the god. Whereas our sources stress the conservatism of Vespasian's rebuilding of the Capitoline temple, accounts of the *aedes* constructed by Domitian emphasize its unprecedented opulence (Plut. *Publ.* 15.3–4, cf. Mart. *Ep.* 9.3.1–8). Elsewhere on the Capitol, Domitian set up a temple for Jupiter Custos, in which could be seen a statue of himself in the god's lap (Tac. *Hist.* 3.74). Presumably it was in this guise (or that of Jupiter Conservator, to whom Domitian had previously dedicated a shrine) that the god had provided for Domitian's salvation in 69, when the young prince escaped from the siege in which the Republican temple of Jupiter Capitolinus had been destroyed.

On the slope of the Capitol overlooking the Forum Romanum, Domitian completed the temple of his deified father, Divus Vespasianus, in which Titus would be worshiped as a *divus* as well. The location of this temple on the *clivus Capitolinus* reinforced the link between the Flavian house and the gods of the Capitoline, while its visibility from the Forum provided an opportunity for the new dynasty to insert itself into the traditional epicenter of political and ideological communication in the city. From their perch alongside the temple of Concord, the newly deified emperors looked out across the steps of the temple of Saturn toward the temple of Julius Caesar, which stood at the opposite end of the Forum along an axial alignment first imposed upon this space by Augustus.

Just as the Flavian era saw new developments in the nature of the imperial cult outside of Rome, inhabitants of the city also witnessed a renewed emphasis on the posthumous deification of members of the Imperial household. In addition to the temple of Vespasian and Titus on the Capitoline, Domitian also constructed a porticoed precinct of these *divi* (the Divorum) on the Campus Martius and rebuilt the site of the house where he was born on the Quirinal as a temple of the *gens Flavia* (Coarelli 2014, 194–207). The Arch of Titus (see Fig. 27.4) is rightly regarded as a monument of the Judean triumph commemorated in its relief panels (see Figs 6.1 and 6.2), but its dedicatory inscription records that it was set up as an honor for Divus Titus, who is duly identified as the son of Divus Vespasianus as well (*CIL* 6.945; see also CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 1.2). Titus' apotheosis (on the wings of Jupiter's eagle) is even depicted at the top of the archway's coffered ceiling (Pfanner 1983, 76–7 and 99).

The Temple of Julius Caesar has already been mentioned as a precedent for such things. In addition, there was an altar of the Gens Iulia that stood on the Capitol both before and after the fire of 69 (*CIL* 16.7, 12). On the Caelian hill, overlooking the site of the Colosseum, was the temple of another deified predecessor, Claudius. Its precinct had been established on a grand scale under Nero, but the temple itself was notoriously left unfinished after more than 13 years (Suetonius even suggests that it was demolished at some time after Agrippina's downfall in 59: *Vesp.* 9.1). The temple's completion thus became one of the great accomplishments of Vespasian's building program. The Flavians' attention to this monument may be interpreted as a rebuke to Nero's lack of filial piety or as a heartfelt expression of regard for an early patron of the family's

fortunes, but it also marks the beginning of their interest in the concept of an emperor's incipient divinity.

Pliny the Younger is characteristically ungenerous when he suggests that Titus only deified Vespasian and Domitian so that they might be regarded as the son and brother of gods (*Pan.* 11.1), but there is no denying that this kind of honor for dead relatives raised the stature of surviving members of the household as well. This is not the place to rehash the evidence for Domitian's association with the titles *dominus et deus* (Master and God: see CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, section 2), but we may note Pliny's further complaint about the number of Domitian's statues, which stood on the Capitol and elsewhere (*Pan.* 52.3). Many of these would have been triumphal dedications, continuing the dynasty's emphasis on that theme (cf. Suet. *Dom.* 13.2), but the most prominent one would have been the *Equus Domitiani*, a colossal statue of Domitian on horseback, which stood in the open plaza of the Roman Forum, with its hand outstretched in the direction of Caesar's temple (Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.22-31; Fig. 8.5).¹ Beyond this, along the Sacra Via, stood the Arch of Titus, as well as Nero's colossus of the Sun, which in its final form some viewers felt bore a resemblance to Titus (Cass. Dio 66.15). The scale and orientation of the *Equus* thus suggest that Domitian was at least willing to place himself in a dialog with his deified predecessors.

In the area of the Campus Martius that was damaged by the fire of 80, Domitian rebuilt the Iseum Campense, Rome's principal temple of the Egyptian goddess Isis. His family's interest in the site can be traced to 71, when Vespasian and Titus spent the night there before their shared triumph (Joseph. *BJ* 7.123). The exact form of Domitian's rebuilding is not certain, but it is likely to have included a Serapeum housed in an apsidal



Fig. 8.5 *Sestertius* of Domitian, 95/96 CE. Reverse depiction of *Equus Domitiani*. *RIC II*² 324 no. 797. Drawing by author

portico at one end, which faced the temple of Isis proper at the other end of a long dromos (Roulet 1972, 23–35). The precinct's most remarkable Flavian feature was an obelisk of red granite, which now stands above the central fountain in the Piazza Navonna. The inscription of Egyptian hieroglyphs along its shaft honors Domitian as the “lord of the Two Lands” and “beloved of Isis” in a manner traditional to the praise of the pharaohs (Darwall-Smith 1996, 145–7).² The text would have been unintelligible to the overwhelming majority of Rome's inhabitants, and thus became one of the only honors to survive the condemnation of Domitian's memory. It certainly offers a unique glimpse onto the nature of his relationship to the divine.

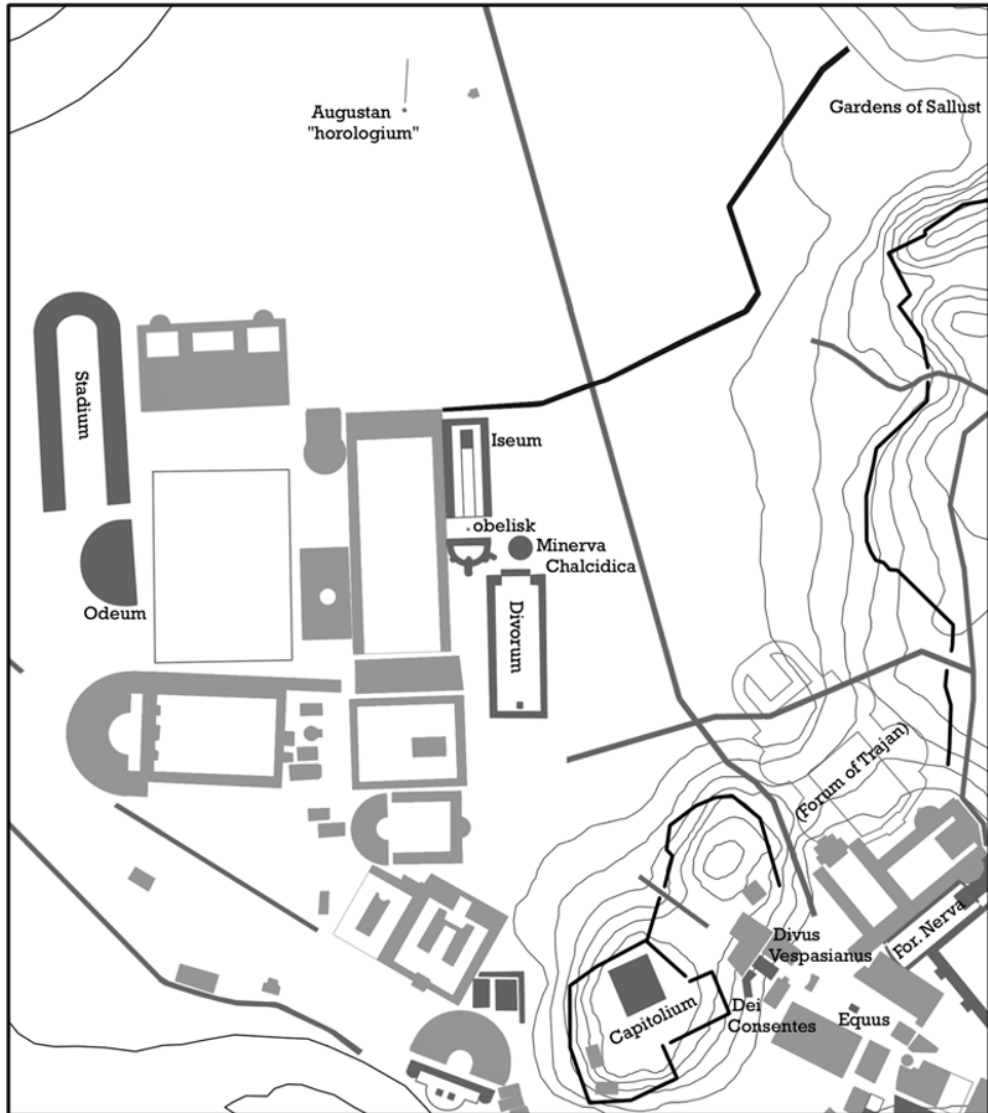


Fig. 8.6 Map of the Campus Martius, Capitulum and Forum

Augustus had been the first to introduce obelisks to Rome, bringing two over from Heliopolis in 10 BCE and setting them up as dedications to the sun (*CIL* 6.701, 702, *Amm. Marc.* 17.4.12). One of these stood on the *spina* (central dividing wall) of the Circus Maximus, the other in a spot to the north of the Iseum on the Campus Martius, near the *Ara Pacis*. The latter obelisk functioned as the gnomon of an enormous solar calendar, which traced the progression of the seasons through the changing length of the shadow cast along a meridian line at noon each day. A recent reassessment of this monument stresses the fact that the only excavated remains are those of a meridian line that was reset in a pavement of Domitianic date (Heslin 2007). This restoration of the Augustan monument was apparently an attempt to recalibrate the device, which Pliny the Elder (*NH* 36.73) says had become inaccurate over time. Such a gesture accords well with an interpretation of Flavian policies as an effort to restore the Principate from its Neronian decadence to the harmonious balance it had enjoyed under Augustus. It should also be noted, however, that the reconfiguration of this monument by an emperor who attempted, again following Augustan precedent, to rename September and October after himself (*Suet. Dom.* 13.3) was itself a striking exercise of the power he wielded as *pontifex maximus* in matters calendrical.

A similarly bold assertion of religious authority can be seen in Domitian's reauthorization of the Secular games (*ludi Saeculares*), notionally a once-per-century festival, which had last been held in 47 under Claudius (*Tac. Ann.* 11.11.1). For these games, the emperor constructed a new, permanent stadium for chariot races on the Campus Martius, as well as an odeum for choral performances nearby. Although the occasion was extraordinary, the construction of such buildings was in keeping with what might be described as a Flavian emphasis on providing new spaces for public entertainment in Rome. Domitian also completed work on the Colosseum and augmented it with the *Ludus Magnus*, a training arena and barracks for the gladiators that communicated with the amphitheater by means of an underground passageway. Elsewhere, he constructed a pool for staged naval battles, or Naumachia, the location of which is now unclear.

In addition to these singular examples, Domitian also built or restored a number of religious sites of a more conventional character. Several Republican temples on the Campus Martius, including those in the modern Largo Argentina, show signs of Domitianic restorations. In the Forum, he restored the temple of the Dioscuri, as well as the statues of the *Dei Consentes*, archaic gods of Rome's earliest pantheon, which he placed in a portico that stood along the *clivus Capitolinus* beside the temple of his deified father. Pride of place went to Minerva, however, who was also a member of the Capitoline triad housed in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. On the Campus Martius, a tholos-like temple of Minerva Chalcidica was built next to the Iseum, immediately to the north of the new Divorum. The Chronographer of 354 (Mommsen 1892, 146) attributes a *templum Castorum et Minervae* to Domitian, but this is probably the result of a conflation of the temple of the Dioscuri he restored with a separate temple of Minerva, which stood nearby on the Palatine (cf. *CIL* 16.36, *Mart. Ep.* 5.5.1).

The most prominent of Domitian's temples to Minerva, however, was the one dedicated after his death by Nerva, which stood in the precinct that Martial (*Ep.* 1.2.8) describes as a *forum Palladium*, but would ultimately be known as the Forum Nervae. Domitian (or, rather, his architects) overcame considerable challenges in transforming what was left of the Argiletum, a once busy commercial and residential district that had

been compressed down to a narrow passageway between the Forum of Augustus and the Temple of Peace, into something that resembled those spaces in its formal coherence. First of all, the plan of these adjacent monuments had to be altered. Some of the entrances to the Temple of Peace were walled off on one side, while on the other, one of the hemicycles of the western portico of the Augustus' Forum was removed (Viscogliosi 2009). Along the walls of the narrow corridor thus created, columns supporting a projecting (*en ressaunt*) entablature gave the appearance of porticoes flanking the temple, but none of the practical benefits (Anderson 1984, 133–5).

The frieze of this entablature, preserved on the extant portion of the wall known as *la Colonnacce*, shows women engaged in the spinning and weaving of wool. These scenes of domesticity are relevant both to Minerva's status as the patron goddess of handicrafts and to the project of restoring traditional values that Domitian evidently took quite seriously (Suet. *Dom.* 8.3: *correctio morum*). Above the archway leading out of the forum into the Subura neighborhood to the north, a frieze appears to depict Minerva in the act of punishing Arachne for profaning the art of weaving with irreverent obscenity. The invocation of this myth evokes Domitian's strict enforcement of religious scruples in his role as *pontifex maximus*, such as when he twice punished Vestal Virgins for breaching their sacred chastity (D'Ambra 1993, 50–4; Suet. *Dom.* 8.3–4). It is worth noting that the solemn procession that took Cornelia, the priestess condemned on the second of these occasions, from the house of the Vestals in the Forum to the place where she would be buried alive for her supposed crimes at the Porta Collina, would have passed along this very route (Gallia 2012, 114).

Perhaps the clearest indication of the extent to which Domitian was elevated above other mortals can be found in the new imperial residence he built on the southeast corner of the Palatine hill. Those who were granted access to the public areas of the palace (known today as the *Domus Flavia*) were meant to be overawed. The immense dining room, which could seat as many as 180 guests, would have impressed with its soaring vertical dimensions. Marble-clad walls rose three stories in height, with columns *en ressaunt* giving way to pilasters in the upper levels (Gibson, DeLaine and Claridge 1994). The name *cenatio Iovis* (Jupiter's dining room, SHA *Pert.* 11.6) comes from a late source, but already in 95 Statius compares the experience of dining in Domitian's palace to reclining alongside Jupiter in the heavens (*Silv.* 4.2.10–11). Across a courtyard from this stood the so-called “Aula Regia,” an equally impressive reception hall, which conflated the function of a private atrium with a scale hitherto reserved for public buildings. Next to this, a slightly smaller room expressly mimics the layout of a basilica, with two aisles along either side set off by colonnades. Each of these rooms featured a large apse set into the east wall, and it must be assumed that this is where the emperor sat when receiving visitors. Whether hosting a dinner party, greeting well-wishers, or sitting in judgment, Domitian was set apart from his subjects, as the architecture of these spaces reinforced his exalted status (Zanker 2002, 118).

Without going into detail about the more private sector of the house (the “*Domus Augustana*”; cf. Packer 2003, 194–7), it is clear that the opulence of the polychromatic marble veneers and the geometric complexity of the layout suggests certain similarities to the Oppian wing of the Golden House. We should resist the temptation to adduce these in support of Juvenal's disparagement of Domitian as a “bald Nero” (*Sat.* 4.38), however. Vespasian may have earned his subjects' approval for abandoning the Golden

House, but he can hardly be described as austere for preferring to stay in the opulent Gardens of Sallust (Cass. Dio 66.10.4; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.30.2). In fact, recent investigation suggests that work on Domitian's Palatine complex was already under way during his father's reign (Wulf-Rheidt and Sojc 2009, 268). Moreover, the Julio-Claudian complex on the side of the Palatine facing the Forum ("Domus Tiberiana") remained in constant use (and was continuously remodeled) throughout the Flavian period (Kraus 1995). If we keep in mind the complexities inherent in the development of Roman urban design, it is hardly surprising that Domitian's architect Rabirius tried to rival what Severus and Celer, his predecessors under Nero, had accomplished (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 15.42.1).

4 The Eternal City

There can be no disputing the fact that the Flavian emperors increased Rome's monumental splendor in myriad ways. Pliny the Elder (by no means an impartial observer) described the Temple of Peace as one of the "most beautiful works the world has ever seen" (*NH* 36.102). Martial regarded Domitian's palace as greater than even the pyramids of Egypt (*Ep.* 8.36.1-3). And yet, neither of these monuments truly transformed the character of life in the city. The poor still lived in densely packed tenements (*insulae*), while the rich continued to inhabit well-appointed *domus* when in town and retreat to their suburban villas as often as they could. The creation of new gardens, porticoes, baths, and venues for spectacular entertainment was of course relevant to the urban populace's ability to enjoy their leisure time, but everything that Vespasian and his sons provided already existed at Rome in one form or another. The Flavians' building programs may have increased the availability of these amenities and perhaps altered the way they were experienced in superficial ways, but their urban munificence was not substantially different in type from that of emperors who came before or after them (cf. Zanker 2010).

This continuity, I suggest, was ideologically significant in itself. It was not just Rome's power or that of its emperors that the Flavians sought to promote, but also their restoration of stability and good government. In 75, Vespasian enlarged the *pomerium*, or sacred boundary of the city, exercising his rights as someone who had expanded Roman territory through conquest (Gell. *NA* 13.14.3, cf. *CIL* 6.930). The ceremony, which had also been performed by Claudius, suggested a symbolic refounding of Rome, and marked the emperor's responsibility for the city in its fullest territorial extent. Two years prior, Vespasian and Titus held the censorship, an office traditionally associated with the maintenance of public buildings. In this capacity, they conducted a survey of the entire city, from which certain measurements have found their way into the work of Pliny the Elder (*NH* 3.66-7). Clearly this data was used to produce a map of some sort, and it seems likely that this could have provided the basis for a precursor to the massive plan of the city that was engraved in marble and mounted on the wall of a room in the porticoes of the Temple of Peace during the Severan period (Castagnoli 1983, 262-4; Rodriguez-Almeida 2002, 61-6). It would only be fitting for such a map to be set up as part of the precinct's original dedication, in the same year as Vespasian's expansion of the *pomerium*. A marble plan would provide an enduring testament to the city's revival and, more important, its permanence (Taub 1993).

If comparison with the pyramids offers a way to gauge the significance of particular monuments, perhaps we should also consider the testimony of Sex. Julius Frontinus, a prominent member of the Flavian establishment who took over the administration of Rome's water supply after Nerva came to power. Surveying the system of aqueducts in his care, he notes "When you compare them with how many structures are required by all these aqueducts, the pyramids are clearly frivolous and the celebrated accomplishments of the Greeks are worthless" (Frontin. *Aq.* 1.16). Rome's abundant supply of clean water was both a monumental good and a practical one. It was essential, not only for the creation of new gardens and baths, but also for the maintenance of life itself. Although the Flavians did not build any new aqueducts, Vespasian did restore the Aqua Claudia, which he claims had lain in disrepair for nine years, at the start of his reign (*CIL* 6.1257).

As the person most responsible for Rome's continued survival, an emperor had to concern himself with the entire physical infrastructure of the city. The successful operation of these systems had less to do with the ingenuity of one's architects than with the diligence of careful administrators like Frontinus. To ensure an adequate supply of food for the city's population, the Flavians would build new warehouses (including a *Horrea Piperataria*, where spices imported from the East were stored). But Titus also made sure to appoint a trusted figure like L. Laberius Maximus, who had been Vespasian's first procurator in Judea, to oversee the grain supply (*CIL* 6.2059). Although less visible than a monument like the Colosseum, this too was an important part of his legacy for Rome.

NOTES

- 1 The precise location of the *Equus Domitiani* remains in doubt. In Fig. 8.4, I position it according to the generally accepted view of Giuliani and Verduchi (1987). Cf. Thomas (2004), however, who would place it further to the west, on a sight-line with the entrance to the Forum of Nerva.
- 2 Cf. Grenier 2009, who thinks this obelisk was set up by Domitian on the Quirinal as part of the temple of the *gens Flavia*.

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FURTHER READING

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- Richardson, Lawrence Jr. 1992. *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. This update to Platner and Ashby is another helpful resource for the anglophone researcher.
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- Darwall-Smith, Robin H. 1996. *Emperors and Architecture: A Study of Flavian Rome*. Brussels: Latomus. This detailed study is an incomparable guide to the numismatic and literary evidence for the Flavian period in particular.
- Packer, James E. 2003. "Plurima et amplissima opera: Parsing Flavian Rome." In *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, edited by Anthony J. Boyle and William J. Dominik, 167–98. Leiden: Brill. This rich essay is especially illuminating for issues of architectural history.
- Coarelli, Filippo. ed. 2009. *Divus Vespasianus: il Bimillenario dei Flavi*. Milan: Electa. Last but not least, this valuable catalog contains several articles on the city and its monuments under the Flavians, many of which incorporate cutting-edge information from recent and ongoing excavations.

CHAPTER 9

The Flavians and the Senate

Loránd Dészpa

Introduction

In many contemporary narratives of the early imperial period, the organization of power in the Principate is marked as a secondary phenomenon, and its depiction is not without difficulties. This depiction is rooted in cultural representations of an ideal (Republican) past in which codes, such as *libertas*, Cato the Younger and Brutus, play an important role in prescribing conduct within, and speech about, the power structures of the Principate. This makes the shaping of the Principate extremely difficult to grasp, as the line between tyranny and the new political order was extremely tenuous and was the subject of an unceasing struggle for interpretative predominance. The difficulty experienced by contemporaries in describing (and acting in) a political system with an autocratic ruler that could not be treated as a monarchy in either social practices or in discourses is mirrored in the scholarly literature, which offers highly divergent characterizations of the Principate. For Mommsen (1887) it was a diarchy in which power was shared by the *princeps* and the senate. In stark contrast to this view, Béranger (1953) regarded the Principate as an absolute monarchy based on the military, and Gelzer (1923) as a disguised military monarchy. Emblematic of the difficulty faced by scholars in grasping this political system is the dictum of Syme (1939, 323) that “the Principate baffles definition” (see also Winterling, 2009, 122–63).

What makes study of the Flavians and their interactions with the senatorial elite all the more interesting is that, in addition to the fundamental normative deficiency of autocratic rule in Rome, there were additional difficulties. The acceptance of the new emperor Vespasian was complicated by the fact that he was neither part of the established (Julio-Claudian) ruling family nor at the forefront of the Roman aristocracy. His rule in Rome was only possible through a bloody civil war and the execution of some members of the senatorial elite that further undermined the political system.

This examination of the Flavians and the senatorial elite will attempt to tackle five core questions: What were the specific incongruities between the Flavian rulers and the senatorial elite? In what context were they shaped and by whom? How did the Flavians try to address these incongruities? By what discursive strategies were the two incompatible realities (senate and *principes*) integrated into the same political order? How did these discursive strategies, in turn, shape the social interaction of the Flavian *principes* with the senatorial elite? The focus will be on the principates of Vespasian and Domitian, with no specific discussion of the brief reign of Titus. The accession of Vespasian in particular marked an obvious and important political caesura, which helps to throw into relief the complex patterns of interaction between the *principes* and the senatorial elite. Indeed, the dissolution of the old and the emergence of a new political order provide valuable insights into the unique and complex political system that is known as the Principate. The reign of Domitian is equally noteworthy for that emperor's attempt to break with his Flavian predecessors in redefining the relationship between the *principes* and the senatorial class.

1 Breaking out: discourses of transition

In constructing a narrative on the Flavian *principes* and the senate the modern historian has at his disposal a rich and diverse array of evidence. For a narrative that centers on the social and political elite in Rome it is extremely helpful that this elite produced the bulk of our extant literary sources. In addition to literary sources, evidence for power relations between the *principes* and the elite, within the elite and on the self-conception of the elite comes in a variety of forms, including coin issues, honorary inscriptions, reliefs, and architectural structures (see CHAPTER 1, SOURCES AND EVIDENCE). All of these are forms of social practice that articulate discourses along with (non-discursive) social elements. In addition to social practice (as ways of acting) and discourse (as ways of representing), an important heuristic tool in the analysis of this topic is the notion of style (as ways of being). I will approach this topic from the vantage point of the dialectical relationship between discourse, social practice, and style.

In analyzing relations between the Flavians and the senate, scholarly research has focused its attention on two principal topics. The first is the adlection of new members of the senate under Vespasian (for example, Eck 1970; Houston 1977; Halfmann 1979; Devreker 1980a and 1980b; Chastagnol 1992). The emphasis here is on epigraphic sources (honorary inscriptions), with literary sources for the most part playing a confirmatory role. The reason for the adlection under Vespasian is explained either as an attempt to make good the depletion of the senatorial order after the civil war (Levick 1999, 170; Eck 2000, 215–16), or to remove partisans of Nero and Vitellius (Griffin 2000, 34). The second topic has to do with opposition to the Flavians that is linked more (Brunt 1975a; Malitz 1985; Griffin 1989) or less (Wirszubski 1950) to Stoic philosophical conceptions. Here evidence is drawn principally from literary sources, but the texts in question are often not exploited as fully as they might be to flesh out the complexities of senators' relationships with one other and with the *principes*. These texts constitute “outputs” of contemporary

discourses, while at the same time they serve to establish and highlight those discourses. Some of these discourses, however, were shaped in the context of the dissolution of the political order with the deaths of Nero and Domitian – or, to be more precise: they are the result of social practices by which the elite was relocating itself into a new political order.

In the prologue of Tacitus' *Agricola* (2.3–3.2) a homogenous elite, represented by first person plural pronouns (*nos*, we, *nostri*, our) and verbs is framed within a discourse of victimization. Imperial brutality (*saevitia principis*) is located in the recent past, which is to say the reign of Domitian. The emergence of a new, post-Domitianic political system is proclaimed, one in which the Principate and (senatorial) liberty are finally reconciled, beginning with the reign of Nerva. What binds this elite together, besides membership in the senatorial order, is their collective victimization: the physical extinction of some of their number, the loss of voice, idleness, ignorance, envy, and enslavement. The elite is stripped of any kind of agency, absolutely passive (*grande patientiae documentum*), and as such is totally subjugated.

This state of being *patiens* is also a common theme in the writing of Pliny the Younger (for example Plin. *Epist.* 8.14). Through the use of terms such as *ignavia* (idleness), *luxuria* (extravagance), *malum otium* (evil leisure), *contumacia* (arrogance), *dedignatio* (disdain) a particular sociology of the Principate was shaped. First, *ignavia* is ascribed to the *princeps*. Second, when the ruler is idle, active and courageous members of the elite cannot act successfully without risk; *virtus* becomes a quality which provokes fear and envy, so that the surest survival course is inactivity. This is the causal mechanism whereby the ruler's *inertia* is reduplicated in his subjects (Tac. *Ann.* 11.19.3; Plin. *Pan.* 18.1; *Epist.* 8.14.7). Through these representations a caesura is created vis-à-vis the past – and not only to the recent past, but to the whole prior span of the Principate (Plin. *Pan.* 18.1; Tac. *Agr.* 1.3). By bundling together in a negative critique the entire sequence of earlier *principes*, a direct link to an ideal republican past is established (Plin. *Epist.* 8.14).

What the elite has in common now, what binds them to a community is on the one hand their victimhood and on the other hand their special status in a *beatissimum saeculum* (blessed age, Tac. *Agr.* 3.1). Through the use of these two ontologies a transitory space between them also comes into being. Moreover, the blueprint of the new and old eras, and the way scholars today view this period of human history, was created by these discourses of transition. Through these discourses new roles (social actions) and social relations are shaped. So for instance by employing medical vocabulary in the description of a diseased elite, Tacitus is creating for himself the role of a “physician,” in reference to whom his text is the medicine. He is, to be sure, the “junior” physician with the role of chief physician assigned to Nerva and Trajan. Nevertheless, Tacitus is fashioning himself as co-creator of the healing process (and of the shaping of the new political order), thereby creating an asymmetrical relationship with his peers by claiming the power of knowledge. The main ingredient of his medicine is *Agricola*, who, although presented as an outstanding individual, stands for the core body of the senatorial elite. He is an exemplum for the goal-oriented senator, who strives to benefit the *res publica* (commonwealth). By defining the center, Tacitus is also shading the periphery, which is constituted by those whose main goal is personal enrichment or glory. Two groups share the periphery: the *delatores* (informers) and those who were put to death for

provoking the *princeps* (for example, Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus). Agricola demonstrates that

... posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos viros esse obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac vigor adsint, eo laudis excedere, quo plerique per abrupta, sed in nullum rei publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt.

Tac. *Agr.* 42.4

... there can be great men even under bad emperors, and that duty and self-restraint, when joined to activity and vigor, may attain a glory which most men reach only by a hazardous way and an ostentatious death that does not benefit the state.

The core values under the banner of which Tacitus is leading his fellow senators into a new age are *moderatio*, *prudentia*, *tranquillitas* and *otium* (*Agr.* 6.3) as opposed to *contumacia* (42.3). All these indicators of social action point towards passivity, which becomes necessary under certain political conditions. They also speak to the innocence of the senators: being passive means “having done nothing wrong.” Through these discourses of transition, members of the core body of senators are cast as simple victims of bad *principes* (*sub malis principibus*, 42.4), invidious *delatores*, and suicidal senators.

The constitutive effect of these discourses can be seen in the process of self-identification, the way others are identified and the way the social relations between peers are shaped. A case in point is a letter of Pliny the Younger to Titus Aristo, in which the writer suggestively constructs roles and social identifications:

Dices: ‘Cur quaeris quod nosse debebas?’ Priorum temporum servitus ut aliarum optimarum artium, sic etiam iuris senatorii oblivionem quandam et ignorantiam induxit. Quotus enim quisque tam patiens, ut velit discere, quod in usu non sit habiturus? ... Itaque reducta libertas rudes nos et imperitosprehendit; cuius dulcedine accensi, cogimur quaedam facere ante quam nosse.

Plin. *Epist.* 8.14.2–3

You will wonder why I am asking a question I should be able to answer myself. The fact is we have forgotten our knowledge of senatorial procedure, as of other honest practices, in the servitude of former times ... So, now that liberty is restored, she finds us unprepared and inexperienced: carried away by her charms we are compelled to act in certain ways before we understand them.

Pliny is writing about the loss of *exempla* (models of conduct), about forced idleness, about a cowed and muted senate. Like Tacitus in the *Agricola*, Pliny here speaks on behalf of a group of senators bound together by their collective victimization.

For the period after Nero’s death it is more difficult to document the discourses of transition. The notion of *luxuria* certainly provided one way of establishing a difference vis-à-vis the past and of normalizing the social relations of the present. Pliny the Elder makes of Nero a surpassing *exemplum luxuriae* (for example, *NH* 12.83, 13.22, 33.53, 36.111–12, 37.17.20.). The *luxuria* discourse, however, does not merely cast Nero in an unfavorable light; it also creates an equivalence between *luxuria* and the dissolution of social and moral order. Furthermore, it provides a modality for dissociation from the

political order. In the pseudo-Senecan tragedy *Octavia*, for instance, the figure Seneca dissociates himself from Nero through his role as a philosopher, which also frames his later role as a (failed) *rector* (guide). In a reflective monologue the *saeculum felicissimum* (most blessed age) is re-semanticized by the *persona* of Seneca into the *saeculo ... gravi* (grim age), characterized by impiety, immoral love, lust, rape, murder and excess. *Luxuria* is collocated with words like *malum* (evil), *pestis* (pestilence, ruin), *vitium* (crime, vice), *impietas* (impiety) and *saevire* (rage). Nero's entrance is framed by this moral decline and imminent cosmic cataclysm and presents him as the embodiment of *luxuria* and of disorder on a global scale (Boyle, 2008, 181). He may not be the *auctor* (creator) of this decadent age, but his immoral behavior has consequences for the world as the whole (*orbis terrarum*) is doomed to finance Nero's luxurious life in Rome (*Oct.* 626–30). The *Octavia* contains other elements of a discourse of transition: the loss of *memoria*, of *exempla* and of *virtus* (*Oct.* 288–95), as well as the enslavement (*Oct.* 492–3) and inactivity or the safety of living in obscurity (*Oct.* 896–8).

The discourses of transition were shaped in the context that resulted from the deaths of Nero and Domitian. *Optimus est post malum principem dies primus* (Tac. *Hist.* 4.42.6), or in other words: after the death of bad emperor, it is open season in the senate.

2 Developments under Vespasian

The word used by Tacitus to characterize the relationship between senators in the senate after Nero and the Year of the Four Emperors is *discordia* (Tac. *Hist.* 4.11). The dissension is even more acute when the new *princeps* is far away from Rome, as was the case for Vespasian. In this situation, many senators were looking for justice or revenge for their murdered relatives and colleagues, and for prestige as well. Through the narrative of justice the established hierarchy in the senate was questioned and the social networks related to this hierarchy are also imperiled. New leaders appeared on the horizon who drew their political strength from the symbolic capital gained by their status as victims. So Helvidius Priscus tried time and again to bring down a heavyweight of the Neronian senate, Eprius Marcellus. After two failed attempts to prosecute him, Helvidius Priscus tried to assail him by other means. He repeatedly exploited issues debated in the senate to represent Eprius Marcellus as a *delator* and an immoral person (Tac. *Hist.* 4.6.3). The result was a virtual paralysis of the senate. The disputes culminated in an oath in which “they called the Gods to witness, that nothing had been done by their instrumentality to prejudice the safety of any person, and that they had gained no distinction or advantage by the ruin of Roman citizens” and in an attempt to consult the *commetarii principis* (the private journals kept by emperors) (Tac. *Hist.* 4.41, 4.40.4).

In this situation, prompt measures were taken to relieve tensions and repair senatorial dysfunction. The first measure was a sort of a general amnesty by Domitian and Mucianus (Tac. *Hist.* 4.44). This was followed by the banishment of two unimportant senators, Octavius Sagitta, who, though a convicted criminal, was not a *delator*, and Antistius Sosianus (Tac. *Hist.* 4.44). A third measure meant to placate senatorial indignation was the investigation and punishment of certain citizens of Sena who had insulted a senator and the senate (Tac. *Hist.* 4.45). These were clearly improvised efforts aimed at calming the situation, and were momentary in effect. The longer-term

project of integrating the senatorial elite into the new principate of Vespasian was facilitated by discourses of transition.

2.1 Challenging political asymmetry

The senate at the end of 69 and the beginning of 70 CE was composed of a volatile mixture of former adherents of Galba, Otho and Vitellius and of supporters of Vespasian. Senators who had a special relationship to Nero were seated next to those who had suffered under the last Julio-Claudian *princeps*. The Flavian *factio* (faction) was split between Antonius Primus and Mucianus. The situation was further aggravated by absence of the *princeps* himself, who remained in Egypt until October 70. The situation in the senate might thus be summarized as follows. First, there had been a power vacuum caused by the collapse of the Neronian order of the senate. Second, the rapid succession of four *principes* had made the divisions among senators deeper than usual, which made the struggle for establishing new power relationships among the senators all the more difficult. Third, the rules by which power asymmetries were shaped in the Julio-Claudian senate were ineffective because of the absence of the *princeps* from Rome. Fourth, those in charge in Rome, exercising power on Vespasian's behalf, were themselves divided and had little *auctoritas*. Likewise, the new *princeps* himself suffered from an initial lack of *auctoritas*.

In this context the renegotiation of power relations in the senate initially involved two broad types of action: first, certain senators were accused of having had a close relationship to Nero (or Vitellius); second, a group around Helvidius Priscus, who was a praetor designate at this time, tried to strengthen their position in the senate while attempting to alter the power asymmetry between the senate and the *princeps*. Our main source for this struggle in the senate is Tacitus, but his account evinces scant interest in spelling out and explaining the political agenda of Helvidius Priscus. The ambiguities in this treatment reveal the sensitivities of Tacitus' time. Giving a clear picture of Priscus' agenda might not have been wise even under the *optimus princeps* (best ruler). Likewise, it might not have been welcome to some of his peers – as for instance Pliny the Younger proudly proclaimed, not to say exaggerated, his closeness to the family of Helvidius Priscus (for example, *Epist.* 3.11, 7.19, 9.13; see also CHAPTER 16, WOMEN IN FLAVIAN ROME, section 2). The treatment of Priscus in the *Histories* is thus often less than forthright. Tacitus begins by sketching a positive picture, associating Priscus with *libertas* and describing him as *opum contemptor*, *recti pervicax* and *constans adversus metus* (despising wealth, determined in the pursuit of right, and undaunted by danger) (*Tac. Hist.* 4.5.2). In the next sentence, however, there is a shift in focalization and authority from the Tacitean narrator to a fuzzy *erant quibus* (there were some) with a different view. Through this pronoun the author introduces a more damning portrait of Helvidius Priscus. It is not just that his *constantia* (steadfastness) is called into question; his actions are now characterized as having nothing to do with *libertas* and justice, but rather aimed at acquiring *fama* and *gloria*. Even worse, his actions divide the senate in two (*Tac. Hist.* 4.6). From the perspective of the *quibus*, in other words, Helvidius Priscus is an agent of *discordia* (discord) in the senate. But what remains striking about this narrative is that, evasions and obfuscations notwithstanding, it clearly indicates the transformation of

Helvidius Priscus from an outcast of the Neronian senate to the influential leader of a large *factio*. His strategy was to disentangle the symbiosis between the *persona* of the *princeps* and the *res publica* and empire. His goal was the re-integration of the *princeps* into the senate as something like an executor of the senate's will.

All his actions point in this direction. On December 21, 69, the day after the death of Vitellius, there was business as usual in the senate. The *patres* were perpetuating the Julio-Claudian language of the Principate by conferring the *tribunicia potestas* (tribunician power), *maius imperium*, and customary prerogatives such as the four leading priesthoods on Vespasian. Moreover, the senate demonstrated its consensus in favor of Vespasian by nominating him and Titus for the consulship, and Domitian for praetorship with an *imperium* equal to a consul. Both of Vespasian's sons were also honored with the designations "Caesar" and *princeps iuventutis* (leader of the youth). The first attempt to alter the language of the Principate and thereby to shift the power asymmetry was made by Helvidius Priscus on the same day. He requested that the senate should chose the envoys to congratulate the new *princeps* not by lot, but by the serving magistrates under oath, in order to stipulate for Vespasian the kind of interlocutors he should have (Tac. *Hist.* 4.6.3–8). Priscus' action was characterized by Eprius Marcellus as an attempt to "ascend over the *princeps*" (*supra principem scanderet*, Tac. *Hist.* 4.8.4). On the same day Helvidius Priscus made two additional attempts to restructure the power relations of the Principate. The *praetores aerarii* (praetors assigned to the treasury) complained about the plight of the state treasury. Valerius Asiaticus argued that the financial restructuring of the *aerarium* should be carried out by the *princeps*. Helvidius Priscus, on the other hand, argued that the senate should take an active role in resolving the financial problems. He was clearly not the only one holding this opinion, since his proposal had to be met with a tribunician veto (Tac. *Hist.* 4.9.1–2). Another contentious issue was the restoration of the Capitol, which had been badly damaged in the final days of the civil war. Helvidius Priscus proposed that the restoration be carried out with public funds with Vespasian merely providing assistance (*censuerat Helvidius ut Capitolium publice restitueretur, adiuuaret Vespasianus*, Tac. *Hist.* 4.9.3). Both actions represented an effort to relocate agency and thereby to marginalize the *princeps*. Helvidius Priscus was clearly attempting to make the senate the originator of political action in the *res publica* and the empire, with the *princeps* assuming a secondary role. Priscus was transgressing a *habitus* and reversing the established pattern of the Julio-Claudian Principate, whereby the *princeps* requested an action like the building of a temple, or the use of the *aerarium*, and the senate endorsed his request and asked him to carry out the work (Brunt, 1966, 75–91 and 1975b, 423–44). These communicative acts have two semantic levels. First, by endorsing the *princeps*' request the senate shows its consensus towards him; likewise, by making the request in the first place the *princeps* confirms the importance of the senate and of the senators. Second, by this action the power relation or the political asymmetry between the *princeps* and the senate is reaffirmed in a sensible way. Through this communication both the senate, as a hallowed institution of the *res publica*, and the *princeps* were integrated time and again into the political system.

In the highly semanticized space of the Capitol, the proposals of Helvidius Priscus had implications beyond the mere restoration of a damaged building. The Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was Rome's most important religious building, and one with strong links to the Republic (Wardle 1996, 208). Both Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Terminus

(the god of boundaries, around whose shrine Jupiter's great temple had been built) were closely associated with the *imperium* of the Roman people and with the stability and permanence of the empire (Virg. *Aen.* 9.448; Liv. 1.55.4). In narrating the destruction of the Capitol, Tacitus dwells on this association (Tac. *Hist.* 3.72, 4.54.2).

With Rome's second dynasty still inchoate, the actions of Helvidius Priscus came at a critical moment in the evolution of the Principate; they constituted an attempt to shape the power relations both within the senate and between senators and the *princeps*. This was not just a challenge to the emperor's monopoly on major building projects in Rome (though that was certainly part of it: see Darwall-Smith 1996, 43–4). By asserting the obligation of the senate to rebuild the Capitol, Helvidius Priscus affirmed that body's link to the Capitoline gods as the guarantors of the *imperium* of the Roman people, and thus the senate's importance to the continuity of the Roman domination (Wardle 1996, 216). In so doing, moreover, Helvidius Priscus was undermining the established symbiosis between the *princeps* and the empire. In other words, Helvidius Priscus' proposal that the senate should rebuild the Capitol and the *princeps* merely help, was on the illocutionary level advocating a leading role in the empire for the senate, and a more subsidiary one for the *princeps*. He could not persuade the senate to support his proposals, but his prominence at the religious ceremonies on the Capitol on June 21 (well analyzed by Wardle 1996, 210–12) suggests that his influence after this failure was not broken. His later behavior toward Vespasian points to the same conclusion. By omitting mention of the *princeps* from his official acts as praetor (Suet. *Vesp.* 15), and by addressing him simply as "Vespasian" (*privato nomine Vespasianum salutaverat*, Suet. *Vesp.* 15; as emperor he was properly "Imperator Caesar Vespasianus Augustus"), Helvidius Priscus was bringing him back into the senate, as it were, ignoring the exceptional position and associated nomenclature of the *princeps*. The proposal of Junius Mauricus (who was later exiled under Domitian) to open the *commentarii principis* (the private journals kept by emperors) to the senate's inspection for the investigation of crimes (Tac. *Hist.* 4.40.4) can likewise be seen as an attempt to shift the asymmetry between the senate and the *princeps* at the latter's expense. This incident importantly shows that Helvidius Priscus was not operating alone. The height of the dispute with Vespasian was reached later during a meeting of the senate in 71, at which Helvidius Priscus clearly resisted Vespasian's efforts to designate Titus his successor (Cass. Dio 66.12). Since the granting of tribunician power was the established manner of indicating an imperial successor, this was probably the measure that Priscus opposed. Such resistance to Vespasian's dynastic ambitions would have constituted a particular provocation. As a result of this incident Helvidius Priscus was arrested by the tribunes; he was later exiled and put to death.

2.2 Constructing the *status quo*

It may have been in reaction to, or in fear of, such attempts to redefine power relations between the *princeps* and the senate that Flavian agents promulgated the so-called *Lex de imperio Vespasiani*, which is usually dated to early 70. As Hurler explains, this *Lex* probably originated as a resolution in the senate that the *comitia* ratified in the perfunctory fashion that was typical of the early imperial period (see CHAPTER 1, SOURCES AND EVIDENCE, section 2). By its stipulations, the authority of the *princeps* is placed outside

the senate and the fundamental symbiosis between the *princeps* and the *res publica* is reaffirmed. (The full text and translation of the *Lex* are provided in APPENDIX 4).

By virtue of clauses I and V the *princeps*, not the senate, is invested with the authority to conclude treaties, carry out the *propagatio imperii* (expansion of the empire's boundaries) and manage the affairs of empire. By clauses II, III, and IV the power relationship between the *princeps* and the senate is fixed to the former's advantage, including the right of *commendatio* to magistracies. The purpose of clause VI, that the *princeps* should have the authority to do "whatever he deems to be in the interests of the commonwealth or in accordance with the dignity of Roman affairs, both secular and religious, public and private," is to provide a catch-all. By stipulating precise powers bestowed upon the *princeps* the law was *nolens volens* limiting his authority; clause VI overrode this flaw.

In citing imperial precedents – similar accumulations of powers accrued by Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius are repeatedly referred to – the *Lex* is in effect creating (or, perhaps better, formalizing) a tradition. By its terms, the *princeps* is on the one hand part of the senate and perhaps the assembly – inasmuch as both demonstrate their consensus towards him – and is on the other hand independent of them. This independence is given pointed expression in clause VIII, which backdates the authority of Vespasian as *princeps* to July 1, 69 – that is, the date he was acclaimed by the soldiery, not the date he was recognized by the senate. By defining July 1, 69 as the *dies imperii*, Clause VIII implies that the senate had it wrong for almost six months, and locates the authority of the *princeps* outside the senate (a point reinforced by another innovation, namely, the backdating of Vespasian's *tribunicia potestas* to July 1, 69). Indeed, the earliest document of Vespasian's reign is a milestone in the Jezreel Valley in Judea, erected in his name by his legate M. Ulpius Traianus (father of the future emperor). It clearly dates to the second half of 69, since it lacks the full imperial titulature that came with the formal recognition of the senate (Isaac, 1998, 36). But the milestone makes evident Vespasian's position in the *res publica* by the title "Imperator Caesar Augustus." All of this points to the fundamental importance of the army. It also underscores the reason why Vespasian held the position he did, namely his outstanding military prowess. This was what distinguishes him from the vast bulk of his fellow senators; this is why he was entitled to be *princeps*. A significant effort was made in various media to persuade his fellow citizens of this quality (see CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 1).

2.3 Mediating political asymmetry: defining a new era

Vespasian's principate is initially characterized by a struggle to situate the new *princeps* into the emerging political order. Interestingly, both the attempt of Helvidius Priscus and his group of senators and that of the Flavians to shape the new order brought to the fore the alterity of the *princeps*. In other words, the problematic nature of the Principate was demonstrated by efforts to relocate the *princeps* in the senate as well as by attempts to establish a pretended *status quo ante*. Hence, a core problem was how to integrate these two elements (senate and *princeps*) into the same political order. Could a new political configuration be established without exacerbating tensions arising from the essential incompatibility of the senate and the *princeps*?

Vespasian's second building project in Rome was completion of the Temple of the Divine Claudius (Darwall-Smith, 1996, 48–55). This act provided an early hint, particularly for the elite in Rome, as to the future under the new *princeps*. Finishing Claudius' temple was part of network of social practices that constituted the order of discourse under Vespasian. Each of these social practices featured several semantic levels. So for instance, by building the temple of *divus Claudius*, Vespasian was at the same time portraying Nero in a particular way: as an impious and degenerate son who had converted part of his father's temple into a *nymphaeum*. Vespasian was, moreover, linking himself to the Claudian era, through the implication that the Flavian order of the *res publica* was a resumption of the Claudian order. Hence, the Flavian order was imagined as a succession of two states of affairs: First, a time of war, as *propagatio imperii*, and second a time of peace. The end of the first state was emphasized through the triumph held in June of 71, whereas a whole network of social practices structured the time of peace: the *Templum divi Claudii*, the enlargement of the *pomerium*, the censorship of Vespasian and Titus, the *Templum Pacis*.

This order of discourse framed the order of the *res publica* and of the empire. Likewise, by the same network of social practices the *princeps*' persona merged with the *res publica* and the empire. So for instance, through the enlargement of the *pomerium* Vespasian and Titus were monumentalizing their role as *propagatores imperii* (expanders of the empire) and that of *curatores* (overseers) of Rome and of the world as a whole (*orbis terrarum*). The core message was that they were able to enlarge the empire and that they could and should order the *oikoumenē*. This second role was introduced into the social practice by the censorship in 73 CE as the restoration of the moral, the political and even the territorial order.

Through the *Templum Pacis* Vespasian reinforced the symbiosis between his persona and the *imperium Romanum* by presenting himself as the enabler and guarantor of, peace, order and the well-being of the Roman citizens and of the *orbis terrarum*. The temple constituted a material embodiment of the civil activities of the post-war period and its benefits. The objects displayed within it opened up two semantic fields: they stood for the *oikoumenē*, which is here associated with the concept of peace, and they defined the *pax Romana* by symbolizing its inherent qualities – victory, power, prosperity and majesty. In the temple, various concepts were combined, including Rome and its people, peace and its attributes, *oikoumenē*, and the *princeps*. By embedding these concepts within a religious context, they are presented as self-evident, constitutive elements of the political order. In this discursive construction of imperial reality, the rulers become the element that naturally unifies Rome and the empire. By occupying the space between Rome and the *oikoumenē*, Vespasian depicts himself as the source and guarantee of this relationship and order.

These ideas are combined and communicated in an exemplary fashion by a Flavian coin issue that was a virtual copy of a Claudian predecessor (*RIC² Vesp.* 30). Particularly suggestive is the reverse side, on which the goddess Nemesis is depicted. This divinity symbolized the ideas of victory and vindication, probably referring in the Claudian context to the conquest of Britain. Claudius, however, did not confine himself to a visual memorialization of his just war: an additional semantic field was opened by the inclusion of the *caduceus* (a herald's staff) and the snake, two symbols having to do with fortune, well-being and peace. Hence, while Nemesis reminded the viewer of the recent war, these two additional symbols pointed towards more positive future prospects. The writing

on the coins shows that the image was not intended to have a merely retrospective evocation. The text in the dative *Paci Augustae* complements the visual language: it mentions the state of peace, which is semantically evoked by both the word and the two symbols, and the person whom they had to thank for it. Through this imperial discourse the *princeps* is merged with the *res publica* and empire.

2.4 Social networks and the political order

If imperial discourse represented and shaped the order of the world in a particular way, it nonetheless could create meaning only for subjects who understood the world in a similar way and subjected themselves to its arrangement. In April, 73 Vespaian assumed the censorship with Titus as his colleague, an office that they held for the customary 18 months. Among other prerogatives, the censor regulated senate membership, empowered both to remove unfit senators and to admit deserving individuals as new members. Upon assuming the office, Vespaian and Titus conducted a *lectio senatus* (a “reading out” or enumeration of senators, with those deemed unworthy struck from the list), by which the moral authority of the body was enhanced. In describing the *lectio* Suetonius employs the discursive field of the Flavian era and hence uses a vocabulary of moral resurgence: *contaminatus* (contaminated), *purgo* (purify), *neglegentia* (negligence), *indignus* (unworthy), *honestus* (honorable) (*Vesp.* 9.2). Vespaian also added new members to the senate, which, even before the *lectio* suffered from depleted numbers. The new senators – only 20 individuals can be securely identified as additions – came from Italy as well as from the provinces and were added to the senate with the status of ex-tribunes, ex-aediles or ex-praetors (Levick, 1999, 170–1).

The senate as an institution participated in the “restoration” of moral order under Vespaian – perhaps unsurprisingly, since, according to Cass. Dio 66.10.5, Vespaian frequently attended its meetings. Two *senatus consulta* relating to public morals are worth mentioning in this regard. The first was a re-enactment of the *Senatus consultum Claudianum*, originally passed by the senate in 52 CE on the proposal of Claudius, which imposed harsh penalties on free women cohabiting with slaves. By this re-enacted decree, in Suetonius’ words, *libido atque luxuria* (wantonness and extravagance) (*Vesp.* 11) were prohibited. The *Senatus consultum Macedonianum*, likewise dating to Vespaian’s reign, stipulated that creditors were not allowed to sue over loans made to sons still under their father’s authority (Gai. *Inst.* 1.160; Talbert 1984, 443–4). In passing such measures, the senate portrayed itself as the restorer of order alongside the *princeps* and was thus inscribed into a generic area of action with a specific role. Moreover, the imperial discourse also produced places for individuals within the discursive field – subject positions – from which the parts of the world represented by the discourse made sense. So, for instance, the two consuls for the year 73, L. Cornelius Pusio Annius Messalla and Pegasus, put forward the so-called *Senatus consultum Pegasianum*, tightening the regulations for legacies not listed in a will but entrusted for fulfillment to the beneficiary of a will, hence emphasizing the resurrection of the old moral order by enforcing family allegiance (Gai. *Inst.* 2.258–9; 268a; see also 1. 31; Griffin, 2000, 22 dates the consulship of the two to 73; Champlin, 1978, 276 puts it three years earlier). The discourse also structured the style of behavior for the elite. So Suetonius reports that a young man

appointed to a military prefecture who smelled of perfume incurred the displeasure of Vespasian, who rescinded the appointment with the remark that he would have preferred him to smell of garlic (Suet. *Vesp.* 8.3).

The restoration of moral order went hand in hand with the restoration or shaping of territorial order. Senators from Vespasian's entourage like Vibius Crispus in Hispania, M. Ulpius Traianus in Syria, Cn. Pompeius Collega in Cappadocia and C. Rutilius Gallicus in Africa, ordered the imperial space and its inhabitants (*AE* 1986, 694; *MW* 86, 277, 334, 446, 448, 449). They acted as hubs through which the imperial discourse flowed to the peripheries of the *imperium Romanum*. At the same time restoration of public land that had fallen into private hands took place both in Italy and in the provinces (for example, *AE* 1992, 92; see Piganiol, 1962, 81). Provincial governors under Vespasian seem to have paid particular attention to the illegal possession of public land, which was again restored to the state. In such actions, the imperial discourse framed the style and concrete role of the administrative elite in a generic area of action. Hence, the order established by the *princeps* eliminated contingency in Rome between him and the senatorial elite on the one hand, and determined conduct within the empire on the other. In this way senators knew what the expectations were and could take on roles that aligned them with the *princeps*. Moreover, the imperial discourse helped shape interactions on various levels: between the emperor and the senatorial elite, between the emperor and the provincial communities, between the Roman and the provincial elites, between the communities themselves, and so on. In this way it exploited elements from discourses of transition, such as *luxuria* and its deleterious impact on society. Through entanglements between discourses, particular representations attained a hegemonic status and hence came to structure various areas of life in the *imperium Romanum*.

3 Developments under Domitian

As *princeps* Domitian initially demonstrated continuity with the regime of his father and brother by appointing to his *consilium* and promoting to high office and governorship individuals who had been favored by his father and brother (Devreker, 1977; Griffin, 2000, 59). In the first two years of his reign, moreover, Domitian handled the consulship in the same way as his two predecessors did, that is to say holding the ordinary consulship with close relatives and granting the suffect consulship to prominent Flavian supporters. From 84, however, he gradually departed from the policy of his predecessors, so that he regularly allowed non-Flavians to hold the ordinary consulship (Jones, 1992, 163–5).

A more fundamental break with the policy of his father and brother emerged in the shaping of the imperial persona. Whereas Vespasian had styled himself as best qualified among his contemporaries to rule, Domitian opted to style himself the best *princeps* ever. He generated this persona through favorable juxtapositions, both explicit and implicit, with Augustus, the imperial model *par excellence*, thereby signaling his surpassing of that illustrious predecessor. Hence it was not by accident that Domitian selected Germania, the region in which Augustus had conspicuously failed, as the touchstone for his military persona. He inscribed his outstanding victory both in space, by creating two new provinces (Germania Superior and Germania Inferior), and in time, by renaming two months

of the year. After celebrating a triumph over the Chatti in 84 and adopting “Germanicus” as a *cognomen*, Domitian renamed September (the month of his accession) “Germanicus” and October (the month of his birth) “Domitianus” (Suet. *Dom.* 13.3). The qualitative difference between Domitian and Augustus was underlined also in Rome, where the last Flavian *princeps* brought to perfection a number of Augustan structures (Heslin, 2007; Panzram, 2008, 81–100; for the idealization of Domitian in contrast to Augustus see also Stat. *Silv.* 4.1.31–3; Coleman, 1988, 76–7). By using Augustus to emphasize his own greatness and singularity, Domitian sought to affirm his preeminence among Roman *principes*, and to imply his ascendancy over his Flavian predecessors.

3.1 Styling the princeps: performing and representing greatness

During the reign of his father and brother, Domitian’s political role had been peripheral. He had, it is true, been awarded numerous honors, including six consulships (though only in 73 as ordinary consul), the titles of *Caesar* and *Princeps Inventutis*, and various priesthoods (Jones, 1992, 18–21). Such honors would have meant a great deal in the Julio-Claudian context, but in the Flavian political environment, with Titus as virtual co-ruler, they meant very little, and Domitian seems to have withdrawn into *otium*, spending most of his time at the Alban villa while pursuing excellence in literature (Suet. *Dom.* 2.2; Quint. *Inst.* 4 pr. 3–5; see CHAPTER 26, LOST LITERATURE, section 1). Thus, after Titus’ sudden and unexpected death, shifting his persona from *litterateur* to surpassing *princeps* was no small task.

The features and style of the new imperial persona are of course crucial for our understanding of Domitian’s relationship with the senatorial elite, as well as the interaction of the senators with the *princeps* and among themselves. These features have left their traces in various communicative contexts, though the “voice” of the *princeps* himself is somewhat underrepresented in them. The most important characteristic of Domitian’s military persona, his invincibility, could be readily projected in Rome and elsewhere in various media – and indeed was done so *ad nauseam* (see CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 1).

It was no doubt more demanding, though, to perform the role of *censor perpetuus* (censor for life), an office assumed in 85. Here Domitian drew on a broad semiotic landscape from the Roman cultural repertoire in order to make plausible his role as a permanent regulator and guarantor of the social order. One feature, presented in a range of communicative contexts and genres, is the frugality of the *princeps*, his restraint with regard to lavish eating and drinking (Mart. *Ep.* 4.8; Suet. *Dom.* 21; Plin. *Pan.* 49.6). This was a traditional Roman virtue that projected a sense of a moral strength (cf. for example, Plin. *Epist.* 3.11.6). But whereas Statius praised the exemplarity of this conduct (*Silv.* 5.1.120–1), both Suetonius and Pliny would later deny its authenticity by asserting that in private Domitian dined lavishly (Plin. *Pan.* 49.6).

Another feature of Domitian’s persona was reclusiveness from the social space, which was characterized by later writers via adjectives with negative connotations: *solitarius* (solitary) (Plin. *Pan.* 49.6), *secretum* (solitude) (Suet. *Dom.* 3.1), *obscurus* (obscure) (Tac. *Agr.* 42.2), or expressed by the collocation of powerful words such as *tenebrae*

(darkness), *secretum* (mystery) and *solitudo* (solitude) (Plin. *Pan.* 48.4). Domitian's distance from the social space, however, was represented by contemporary poets as associating the *princeps* with the gods, indeed by styling him as Jupiter on earth, or as vested by Jupiter to rule the earth (for example, Mart. *Ep.* 5.8.1, 9.64; Stat. *Silv.* 1.1.62, 1.6.25–7). The significance of the seclusion of the *princeps* from the social space emerges clearly from Mart. *Ep.* 5.5. The distance from the social, suggested by the words *deus* and *secretum*, is brought into relation with the care (*cura*) and thoughts (*pectus*) of the *princeps*. What emerges from this epigram, which is addressed to Sextus, curator of the Palatine library, is the image of a distanced ruler who in his seclusion is occupied with the organization and regulation of the social world. The distance of the *princeps* from the social space affords him a position of impartiality, appropriate to his regulatory role. It is the impartial care of the *optimus princeps* that enables him to settle disputes and rivalries between cities, or to intervene in the case of a breach of law by magistrates.

Key aspects of Domitian's persona were afforded a striking physical articulation through his new palace on the Palatine, the *Domus Flavia*, completed in 92. His greatness and *maiestas* were monumentalized through the daunting elevation and the size of the rooms (MacDonald 1982, 57; Gibson, Delaine, and Claridge 1994, 77–81), whereas his seclusion was staged through the monumental apsidal loge on the backside of the palace and by the various apses (Zanker 2002). The former created a paradoxical impression: the *princeps* still attended the games, thereby meeting established expectations, but he was now elevated in his apsidal loge and so barely visible. He was segregated from the social space, yet overlooking it. In a similar manner the apses from the building gave him the option to stage distance during events such as the imperial *convivia* (banquets). Corresponding to this seclusion is Pliny's complaint over Domitian's break with the proper senatorial behavior, which entailed embracing, and greeting one's fellow senators with a kiss or returning a kiss (*Pan.* 23–4). The withdrawal from traditional patterns of interaction with the elite should be seen as, at least in part, an attempt to render Domitian's role as perpetual regulator of the social space plausible. Be that as it may, Pliny, in praising Trajan, retrospectively attests to the unsettling effect of this seclusion by celebrating the reintegration of the *princeps* within the social sphere:

eademque omnia illa circa te, nihil in ipso te Fortuna mutavit. Liberum est, ingrediente per publicum principe, subsistere, occurrere, comitari, praeterire: ambulas inter nos, non quasi contingas; et copiam tui, non ut imputes, facis. Haeret lateri tuo, quisquis accessit, finemque sermoni suus cuique pudor, non tua superbia, facit.

Plin. *Pan.* 24.4

Everything is the same about you: your change in fortune [i.e. in becoming emperor] has not changed you at all. Whenever the emperor goes out in public, anyone can stop, approach him, escort him, or pass him by. You walk among us, but not as if you were god's gift to us. You make yourself available to us without any obligation on our part. Whoever approaches you stays by your side, and only his sense of decorum, rather than your arrogance, puts an end to the conversation.

tr. O'Sullivan

In his attempt to dissociate the present from the past, Pliny emphasizes that Trajan regulates the *cupiditas* (cupidity) and the *libido* (wantonness) of the community from

within, as part of society: this constitutes a clear repudiation of the secluded Domitianic persona. And yet the attendant notion of impartiality is so powerful that Pliny employs it later in his panegyric (80.3–5) to depict Trajan as an administrator of the empire free of human cupidity and injustice (Levene, 1997, 82).

Modestia (temperate behavior) and *pudor* (modesty) were additional features of Domitian's persona mentioned by both eulogists (e.g. Stat. *Silv.* 4.1.10; Mart. *Ep.* 9.79) and detractors (Tac. *Hist.* 4.40.1, 86.2; Suet. *Dom.* 2.2), and which played an important role in the communication between *princeps* and the elite (Wallace-Hadrill, 1982, 41–4). From the strict manner in which normative transgressions were punished, *severitas* (strictness) was clearly another element.

The role of *censor perpetuus* illustrates how Domitian both retained and redefined traditional elements. The censorship was an old republican office that had been held by the emperors Claudius and Vespasian for a fixed term of 18 months. By the addition of the adjective *perpetuus*, however, the establishment of order became an ongoing process, an endless campaign against disorder. To afford credibility Domitian invoked a variety of new features (abstinence and seclusion) and “traditional” imperial features (*modestia/pudor*, censorial *severitas*, *maiestas*, all, however, in magnified form) that had wide-ranging consequences for the social interaction of the *princeps* with the elite and of the elite among themselves.

3.2 *Heightened contingency: the imperial persona and social interaction*

An epigram written by Martial after Domitian's death offers an example of how post-Domitianic society coped with the past and strove to differentiate that past from the present:

Frustra, Blanditiae, venitis ad me
atritis miserabiles labellis:
dicturus dominum deumque non sum.
iam non est locus hac in urbe vobis;
ad Parthos procul ite pilleatos
et turpes humilesque supplicesque
pictorum sola basiate regum.
non est hic dominus, sed imperator,
sed iustissimus omnium senator,
per quem de Stygia domo reducta est
siccis rustica Veritas capillis.
hoc sub principe, si sapis, caveto,
verbis, Roma, prioribus loquaris.

Mart. *Ep.* 10.72

Flatteries, you come to me in vain, you poor creatures with your shameless lips. I am not about to speak of ‘Lord and God’. There is no place for you any more in this city. Go far away to turbaned Parthians and kiss the soles of gaudy monarchs base, abject suppliants. There is no lord (*dominus*) here, hut a commander-in-chief (*imperator*) and the most just of

all senators, through whom rustic, dry-haired Truth has been brought back from the house of Styx. Under this ruler [sc. Trajan], Rome, beware, if you are wise, of talking the language of earlier days.

tr. Shackleton Bailey

Domitian is referenced via the notorious address *dominus [et] deus* (3, 8), which stands in opposition to *imperator* and *senator*, used of Trajan, who is also characterized as *iustissimus omnium* (9), which presents the new *princeps* as the most eminent member of a group rather than an isolated and unique individual. By figuratively dismissing flattering language (*blanditia*), indeed dispatching it to the Parthians, Martial implies an equivalence between Domitian and eastern monarchs, who likewise tended to be secluded from the social space. Moreover, by collocating words such as *pictorum regum* (“gaudy monarchs”) and *siccis rustica Veritas capillis* (“rustic, dry-haired Truth”) the author draws on the discourse of *luxuria* and evokes the topos of oriental decadence. The *princeps* whom Martial had formerly referred to as *censor maximus* (*Ep.* 6.4.1) is now associated with the idea of moral disorder. Martial declares for the genre of epigram the same discursive rupture, the same repudiation of “the language of earlier days” (*verbis ... prioribus*), that occurred in the political sphere. For Martial and his fellow poets this was unproblematic inasmuch as they produced second-order representations of imperial first-order representations with no claim of truth, and with no direct consequences for the establishment of the social hierarchy among the senatorial elite (Levene, 1997, 92). The problem resided rather in senatorial discourse, where such language had transcended customary limits, thereby mixing up distinct discursive fields. In the public sphere, senators spoke of the divinity of the *princeps*, whereas in private they spoke of the tyrant (Plin. *Pan.* 2.3–4). Hence the senate had been converted into a stage upon which a competition in sycophancy (*blanditia* and *adulatio*) was performed, with senators transformed into actors (Plin. *Pan.* 54.1–4).

Despite Suetonius’ assertion to the contrary (*Dom.* 13.2), this social praxis was not actively promoted by the last Flavian *princeps*. But *blanditia* as a social praxis could gain traction only in the absence of another social praxis, the imperial *recusatio* (that is, the declining of honors vel sim. by the emperor). By means of the *recusatio* and other expressions of *moderatio* the *princeps* manifested his appreciation of the senatorial elite, on the one hand, and, on the other, regulated and channeled the competition between senators. As Pliny put it, it was the *moderatio* of the *princeps* and not the *constantia* of the senators that restrained the competition in *adulatio* (*Pan.* 54.4). The absence of this social praxis opened the door to contingency, as the senators did not have a clear pattern of interaction by which they could pursue their proximity to the *princeps*. Under Trajan, by contrast, contingency was surmounted by imperial *moderatio* and sincerity, which duly structured the patterns of interaction (Plin. *Pan.* 54.5). The only legitimate context for a *gratiarium actio* (speech of thanksgiving) was, according to Pliny, the senate, with the deliverer a magistrate expressing appreciation for something already achieved. However, only the *princeps* could ensure that praise of rulers came in the form of a panegyric performed at the right place by the right person, thereby controlling and channeling such competition among the senatorial elite.

There is, to be sure, an “intertextuality of language” between the encomia for Domitian and Trajan and they share a set of “commonplaces in praise,” as Gibson (2011, 117–8)

has noted. But the language as such is only important in relation to the intention of praise (Plin. *Pan.* 95.4 and *Epist.* 4.7), and its restriction to particular social contexts was crucial. Noteworthy in this respect is Pliny's use of the term *dominus*, viewed through the lens of the unity of social space, proper performance, and language. Pliny rejects the use of *dominus* in the public sphere, while using it in his private correspondence with the *princeps*. In the first context the word is employed with the hope of gaining some advantages by flattery – which makes the reproduction of hierarchy among the elite unpredictable – whereas in the second context *dominus* is a form of personal address used by a Roman magistrate interacting with his superior (e.g. Plin. *Epist.* 10.2).

It should be noted that Domitian did not seek to undermine the credibility of the social hierarchy, as Caligula had before him (Winterling, 2003, 115–20; 135–9). To the contrary, the last Flavian *princeps* viewed as one of his crucial censorial duties the upholding of hierarchy and the defense of the elite's dignity. Hence he did not countenance texts deemed harmful to the honor of the upper orders and he stringently reinforced the hierarchical seating arrangements at public events that served as a mirror of Roman social order (Suet. *Dom.* 8.3). Moreover, Domitian acknowledged the right of high birth and the descent from old patrician families as a qualification for high magistracies (Eck, 1970, 63–4; Jones, 1992, 163–5). But, such intentions notwithstanding, the perpetual censorship of Domitian had a disintegrative effect through the heightened contingency it caused. His role was inscribed into Roman social reality by a mixture of old laws (for example, the Augustan legislation on adultery and the *Lex Scantinia* against homosexual intercourse with freeborn men (Suet. *Dom.* 8.3; Stat. *Silv.* 5.2.102; Mart. *Ep.* 6.22)) and new legislation (for example, a law that forbade the castration of young males (Suet. *Dom.* 7.1; Stat. *Silv.* 3.4.74–7; Mart. *Ep.* 2.60)). The enforcement of such laws effectively brought the *princeps* into every bedroom in Rome.

The consequence was a cascade of acts by which normative deviations were reviled, in a political system that justified its very existence through its public campaign against disorder and moral decay. The emphasis lay, as Pliny put it, on the punishment of bad rather than rewarding of good conduct (see also Stat. *Silv.* 5.2.91). So Caecilius Rufinus, an ex-quaestor, who showed excessive interest in pantomime and dance, was expelled from the senate. Elite women failing to behave according to these laws (*probrosis feminis* – ignominious women) were deprived of the right to use litters and receive inheritances and legacies. Moreover, Suetonius reports that numerous men from both the senatorial and equestrian orders were condemned as offenders against the *Lex Scantinia*. The name of a Roman knight was struck from the list of jurors because he had taken back his wife after divorcing her and charging her with adultery (Suet. *Dom.* 8). Most notorious were the punishments imposed by Domitian in 83, and then in 89 or 90, on some of the Vestal Virgins for violating their vows of chastity. In the earlier case the guilty Vestals were permitted to choose their mode of death while their lovers were banished. In the later one, the chief Vestal Cornelia was buried alive and her lovers were beaten to death with rods, in the traditional way, with the exception of an ex-praetor, Valerius Licianus, who was banished (Plin. *Epist.* 7.11). Through the meting out of such severe punishment, the *princeps* underscored the dangers of moral disorder, which in this case contaminated the sacred hearth upon which the very existence of Rome and its empire depended.

A toxic dynamic resulted from, on the one hand, Domitian's desire perpetually to style himself as enforcing morality and order and, on the other, the eagerness of many

members of the elite to inscribe themselves into the imperial discourse and hence to bridge the gap between themselves and a distant *princeps*. For it must be borne in mind that in all such cases somebody had to witness, hear about, or invent misdoings and then report or otherwise act on them. Domitian's prohibitive laws and regulations thus became very powerful weapons in the hands of *delatores* (informants), who were now capable of inflicting considerable damage.

The situation spiraled out of control in 93 when three senators from prominent families were put to death while a number of their relatives were relegated. Q. Junius Arulenus Rusticus, consul in September 92, was convicted of treason for composing a laudatory biography of Thrasea Pactus. Herennius Senecio, who refused to rise above the quaestorship, was condemned for writing a eulogy of Helvidius Priscus. Their books were publically burned. The younger Helvidius, consul early in the reign of Domitian, was condemned for writing a play about Paris and Oenone. The prosecutors responsible for the convictions, Mettius Carus, Aquilius Regulus, Publicius Certus, and Catullus Messalinus, presented the three accused as veiled critics of the *princeps*. The play of the younger Helvidius was said to allude to the relationship between Domitian and his wife, Domitia Longina. Interpreted in this manner, the play became a sly critique of the *censor perpetuus* for not living up to his own standards. The eulogy of Helvidius Priscus was interpreted as an encoded critique seeking to reopen discussion on the position of the *princeps* in the state; likewise the biography of Thrasea was understood as a way of associating the secluded *princeps* with a tyrant. The climate in which these prosecutions occurred was fostered by aspects of the imperial persona (seclusion from the social space, greatness, and uniqueness) along with his self-appointed role as imposer of order, as well as by the way members of the elite inscribed themselves into the imperial discourse (through *adulatio*, *blanditia*, spying and denouncing divergences from the norm, and by prosecuting one another). The result was a profound dysfunction in interactional patterns among the senatorial elite.

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FURTHER READING

The *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* is essential for our understanding of the relationship between Vespasian and the senatorial elite. Helpful commentary and interpretation of this document may be found in Brunt (1977) and Pabst (1989). There are a number of valuable articles in Capogrossi Colognesi and Tassi Scandone (2009). Winterling (1999) gives a highly interesting and thought-provoking study on the formation of the imperial court and the role of the emperor's *amici*. The self-awareness and self-representation of the senatorial elite is aptly analyzed in the collection of articles in Eck and Heil (2005). Readers interested in the nature of the Principate and its complex political dynamics may consult Bleicken (1991), Flaig (1992), Millar (1992), and Winterling (2009) and (2011).

PART III

Empire

CHAPTER 10

The Economic Impact of Flavian Rule

Alessandro Launaro

Introduction

“Here is an area in which the management of individuals makes a perceptible difference, by maximizing and managing revenue, but also by affecting confidence” (Levick 1999, 95). With these words Barbara Levick begins a chapter entitled “Financial Survival” in her study of the emperor Vespasian. Financial concerns did indeed occupy a central place in the political conduct of the Flavian emperors and several of their acts were directed to raising funds to cover the huge expenses that the imperial budget demanded. But, as Levick intimates, the broad economic impact of this dynasty transcended specific initiatives in its pursuit of a more general strategy whose goal was the consolidation of the imperial state.

Benefiting from the fruitful integration of notions derived from the *New Institutional Economics*, recent scholarship has emphasized the role of the state – and its relevant institutions – in boosting the economic performance of the early Roman Empire (Lo Cascio 2007b). Analysis of the economic impact of the Flavians should thus be grounded in a more general consideration of the (economic) structure of that empire whose survival they ultimately secured. This chapter will begin by introducing the reader to current theoretical thinking in the study of the Roman economy, and discussing those salient institutional features of the Roman state that had an impact on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services across the empire. Once these topics have been presented, it will explore the impact of the Flavian emperors, identifying both continuities with, and departures from, past practices.

1 Framing an ancient economy

Current approaches to the study of the economies of the ancient world constitute the most recent results of a vigorous critical debate that has been ongoing since the late nineteenth century, and which is worth summarizing here (see also the accessible synthesis of

Morley 2004, 33–50, and Morris 1999). The development of modern economics in the later eighteenth century offered a new science meant to analyze and explain human society from the perspective of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. All these activities were held to be subject to universal rules of human behavior (for example, profit maximization, price determination by supply and demand) as they were all ultimately based on competition for scarce resources. On this basis, classical and neoclassical economists had long assumed that a rational person invariably made decisions that were, in terms of expected utility, objectively best. Less efficient behaviors could not bear up against such competition and were therefore doomed to be abandoned in favor of more rational strategies.

1.1 Primitivism vs. modernism

This “selection” mechanism could not but imply the existence of a long-term progression in the economic evolution of human civilization: from less to more complex and sophisticated, from “primitive” to “modern.” Although the term “economy” has an ancient etymology, the original Greek word οἰκονομία literally referred to the “management of the household” – and nothing more than that. Indeed the economist Karl Bücher (1893) placed the ancient economy firmly into the realm of self-subsistence and non-market relationships, describing it as a “close household economy,” the least developed among his three stages (*Stufen*) in the *linear* economic evolution of Europe (late medieval “city economy” and modern “national economy” being the other two). This provoked a strong rebuke from some contemporary ancient historians. Eduard Meyer (1895), a leading scholar on Ancient Greece, criticized Bücher for not taking into account the copious evidence of ancient trade and industrial manufacture, and outlined a completely different account of *cyclical* evolution, by which modern capitalism had already been prefigured in the heyday of Greece and Rome. Thus began the (in)famous Bücher–Meyer controversy (the fundamental texts, in German, are collected in Finley 1979). The opposing camps of “primitivists” and “modernists” engaged in endless debate, pointing at each other’s mishandling of the primary sources, with neither able to deliver a *coup de grace* that might settle the dispute once and for all.

In truth, a third way had been attempted early on by Max Weber (1976 [1908]), the founding father of modern sociology and a foremost scholar of capitalism. Albeit acknowledging the outstanding achievements of the ancient economy (somewhat akin to modern capitalism), he made the important observation that it seemed not to be directed towards reproducing individual (or collective) material wealth so much as towards promoting individual (or collective) social status. Both primitivists and modernists had assumed that the market-based/profit-making economy of their own age was the most advanced form of economy, and looked at the ancient economy from that vantage point, differing only in their judgment as to whether it constituted a primitive phase of a linear progression or an earlier peak within a cyclical development. Weber, on the contrary, put the ancient economy on a completely different level and stressed the importance of approaching it in its own terms. In his view, “the long and continuous history of Mediterranean-European civilization does not show either closed cycles or linear progress” (Weber 1976, 366). Notwithstanding this, it is fair to say that by the mid-20th

century it was the modernizing view of Mikhail Rostovtzeff (1957) that had garnered the most support. He integrated notions from modern capitalism (for example, bourgeoisie, free market, industry) into a general interpretive framework for the rise and fall of the Roman empire, where archaeological evidence of productive activities (especially from Pompeii) was emphasized and enthusiastically employed towards supporting such a view. His position is conveniently summarized in the following passage:

The creation of a uniform worldwide civilization and of similar social and economic conditions is now going on before our eyes over the whole expanse of the civilized world. This process is complicated, and it is often difficult to clear up our minds about it. We ought therefore to keep in view that this condition in which we are living is not new, and that the ancient world also lived, for a series of centuries, a life which was uniform in culture and politics, in social and economic conditions. The modern development, in this sense, differs from the ancient only in quantity and not in quality.

Rostovtzeff 1926, I, 10

1.2 *Substantivism vs. formalism*

The “primitivism vs. modernism” debate, however, came to intersect with another one that was closely linked, but framed in more general anthropological terms. The issue at stake was whether or not it was appropriate to employ modern (Classical and Neoclassical) economic theory to non-western pre-modern societies. On one side, “formalists” argued that economic laws were universal and could be equally applied to describe any society, the economic sphere always existing outside and independent of social relations. On the other hand, “substantivists” denied any universal character to such economic laws, which, they argued, had been specifically developed to explain modern western (that is, capitalist) society. Whereas in modern societies the economy represents a distinctive range of activities with its own goals, this was not the case in the ancient world, where such activities were subordinated to social interests, being therefore *embedded* in social structure.

There has been always the tendency to associate primitivism with substantivism, modernism with formalism. This attitude proves incoherent on several grounds. While primitivism and substantivism both recognize that the ancient economy worked differently from the modern one, the former frames it as an early stage of a linear evolution, whereas the latter questions the very idea of such a (linear) connection. On the other hand, if modernism and formalism do both argue in favor of the use of notions and concepts derived from modern economic theory in order to explain the ancient economy, the latter envisions such laws as universal and always applicable, while the former would apply them only because the ancient world was indeed “modern” (cyclical view).

These are subtle differences, but are crucial for understanding the position of Moses Finley (1973 and 1985). Following Weber’s footsteps, he projected himself beyond the very coordinates of the old debate: the ancients were neither primitive nor modern, they were just different and needed to be understood in their own terms – a context where modern economic theory found no place. Social status played a key role in providing a framework by which to evaluate the economic actions of the Greeks and the Romans.

The fact that no ancient author ever theorized about the economy and the absence of preserved ancient statistics were taken as evidence of such different attitudes:

Of course they farmed, traded, manufactured, mined, taxed, coined, deposited and loaned money, made profits or failed in their enterprises. And they discussed these activities in their talk and their writing. What they did not do, however, was to combine these particular activities conceptually into a unit.

Finley 1985, 21

Keith Hopkins assumed a less dismissive attitude towards ancient evidence. Although sharing the view of a world that did not attain modern economic levels, and which was engaged with different social values, he nonetheless endeavored to derive data from the sources in the form of suitable orders of magnitudes. Coupling this approach with comparative data and parametric modeling made it possible for some indicators from modern economic theory (such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) calculations) to find their way into a non-modernist view of the past (for example, Hopkins 1980 and 1995–6). In so doing, he profitably stood between substantivism and formalism, in a way that anticipated later positions.

1.3 *The new institutional economics*

The work of Finley and that of Hopkins are important points of reference in current approaches to the economies of the Greek and Roman world (for example, Morris, Saller, and Scheidel 2007, 2–5). But these current approaches are largely informed by an analytical framework that derives from the works of Douglass North (1981 and 1990), a Nobel laureate and a prominent scholar within the *New Institutional Economics* (NIE). A crucial feature of NIE is its rebuttal of core Classical/Neoclassical beliefs about human behavior. The idea that the rational person will always reach the decision that is objectively best in terms of the expected utility is based on the assumption that individual actors will have both access to complete information and a perfect understanding of it. These two conditions, though, can only be met by allocating resources (for example, time) to acquire such information and also effective ways towards understanding it: these are *transaction* costs.

Uncertainty is, to be sure, costly and hampers the efficiency of the “rational” actor. In order to reduce uncertainty – and the underlying transaction costs – humans have structured their everyday life by way of institutions. By defining and limiting the set of choices available to individuals, institutions provide a simplified framework within which human interaction can more easily take place. These can be both informal (for example, habits) and formal (for example, laws) constraints, the former being usually more persistent than the latter. Given any civilization (past or present), political and economic institutions, technology, demography, and ideology together constitute a specific *structure*. The nature of this structure in turn “determines” economic *performance*, to be appraised in terms of, for example, how much is produced, the distribution of costs and benefits, or the stability of production. According to NIE, economic analysis should therefore concern itself with the study of *structure* and *performance* in their evolution and interaction

through time. The prominent role reserved to the political, social, and cultural specifics of any society is certainly close to a substantivist position; at the same time, the equal stress put on appraising performance by way of notions developed within modern economics (for example, total output, output per capita) involves a rather formalist approach – hence the aforementioned nod in current studies to the work of Finley and Hopkins.

The theoretical premise of NIE is essential. When considering the role of the state in the economic development of any given polity, it is only natural to think of it in terms of a well-defined economic policy. Patterns of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services are obviously an important concern for any nation and, as such, they prompt the definition and adoption of specific sets of economic measures. However, this is too easily taken to imply a modern notion of “economic policy” as a well-defined, separate sphere of political action, subject to specific rules (for example, supply/demand) and aiming to its own goals (for example, resource maximization). For a long time scholars have debated the appropriateness of projecting this assumption back upon the ancient world. As we have seen, this is not merely a matter of placing the “ancient economy” at the right spot along a human progression from “primitive” to “modern”; it raises, rather, a more subtle question about the value of applying this (modern) intellectual framework to (ancient) societies which shaped their everyday choices in accordance with rules and goals that were not independent of the social and political sphere – a sphere in which the economy was ultimately “embedded.” As Finley (1985, 156) observes:

In a society as complex as the Greek or Roman, it is hard to conceive of any action by a state which lacked an economic component, which neither involved disbursements, public or private, nor had an impact on one or another aspect of the economy. In that sense, all public acts are also economic acts, a meaningless statement. To appreciate how the ancient state made its mark on the economy (and vice-versa, the economy on the state), it is necessary not only to differentiate aims and consequences but also to place the accent correctly (I avoid the word ‘cause’), to pinpoint the interests as precisely as possible.

Rather than assuming the existence of a conscious economic policy on the part of the emperors (for example, Paterson 2004), it is therefore preferable to approach the economy of the early Roman Empire by accounting for the more general impact its specific institutional structure had on its performance.

2 The economic structure of the early Empire

As mentioned, the best way to appreciate the specific mark left by the Flavians on the Roman economy is to place their political conduct into the more general context of the early Empire. In other words, it is first necessary to understand the ways in which the empire – itself an *institution* – impacted production, distribution, and consumption patterns across its own vast expanse (helpful coverage of these patterns is now offered in Scheidel 2012).

In this regard, a peculiar class of indicators comes from the Greenland icecap and from the lake sediments of France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland (see for example, Hong *et al.* 1994 (1841); Renberg, Persson, and Emteryd 1994, 323 and 326; comprehensive bibliography in Hopkins 2009, 204 n. 75). The analysis of these various locations

has made it possible to measure long-term variations in pollution levels in the troposphere as determined by wind-borne contaminants from smelting operations for silver, lead, and copper extraction. The resulting diachronic picture suggests that these activities reached a peak during the early Roman Empire that would not be matched again until the Industrial Revolution (Hopkins 2009, 197). Silver mining and copper extraction can be related to unprecedented levels of coinage output, thus implying “a very high monetization of the economy and the widespread use of small change,” both likely indicators of intensive economic activity in this period (Lo Cascio 2007b, 621). This conclusion finds important corroboration in evidence recovered by underwater archaeology. A widely referenced survey of known shipwrecks from throughout the Mediterranean has analyzed chronological distribution, identifying an impressive peak in the Roman period, especially pronounced between the second century BCE and the second century CE (Parker 1992 is the fundamental study, especially 549 fig. 3; Wilson 2009a, 219–37 provides a valuable commentary and critique, along with earlier bibliography). To the extent that the number of datable shipwrecks can be taken as (proxy) evidence for the variable intensity of maritime trade, this does indeed conform to the general picture of intensive economic activity during the early imperial period (Morley 2007, 571–80).

An important related issue is whether or not this increased intensity is in itself a sign that the Roman world was in fact experiencing some level of economic growth (the issue is well framed in Saller 2002; see also Hopkins 1980, 1995–6 and 2009; Lo Cascio 2007a; Scheidel 2009 and Wilson 2009b). Today this kind of phenomenon is most commonly demonstrated through indicators like GDP, that is the value of all goods and services produced within a country in a given period, in itself also a function of demographic development (that is, more people will produce more – *aggregate* growth). However, what makes for *real* economic growth is an increase of *per capita* GDP, that is the average individual share of total production (= GDP/population), itself an indicator of *average* living standards (though Jongman 2007, 395 rightly points out that per capita income “leaves a great deal to be desired as a measure of the real lives and experiences of the mass of the population [as] the cake was divided into very unequal parts”). In this case too, another form of proxy data has proven to be illuminating: remains of mammal bones as evidence of meat consumption. In this case, as Jongman (2007, 394–5) explains, “what we really want to see is evidence of the improvements in the consumption of goods and services above and beyond bare subsistence by significant numbers of ordinary people [...]. Therefore we need to look at goods that are too expensive for the very poor, attractive and potentially affordable for those who lived somewhat above subsistence, but not something the very rich could consume in huge quantities. Meat is a suitable indicator of intermediate prosperity.” The same scholar has plotted quantitative variation across well-dated archaeological sites in Italy and the provinces (Jongman 2007, 613–4, based on King 1999). Again, the pattern seems to peak during the early imperial period, suggesting a concrete improvement in general living standards.

The evidence, then, suggests that the early Empire witnessed increased economic activity in terms of production (metal mining/extraction), distribution (shipwrecks) and consumption (mammal bones). A crucial question is whether or not this situation was in any way a result of the existence of the Roman empire as such. Several considerations would indeed support this view and NIE provides a useful framework through which better to appreciate them (Lo Cascio 2007a, 626–7).

First of all, the Roman empire implied the creation of a unitary political entity encompassing both the Mediterranean region and lands well beyond it. By doing so, it effectively brought “peace” (*Pax Romana*, *Pax Augusta*). Of course, insofar as it was supported by both violent suppression of dissident resistance and military occupation along the frontiers, this cannot be viewed in the abstract sense proper of a universal ideal (Woolf 1993, 189–91). Peace rather existed as a concrete condition of (enforced) stability meant to benefit civilian life *inside* the empire – Italy and the Mediterranean provinces especially. Even though the distribution of such benefits was both geographically unbalanced and socially skewed (Mattingly 2011, 123–99), it seems nonetheless likely that the general population of the early Empire did experience relatively high living standards for a pre-industrial economy (as noted above). A substantial economic impact accrued from “reducing uncertainty” (and underlying transaction costs). Safer sailing conditions arose from the suppression of piracy (already achieved in the closing decades of the Republic) and this greatly favored maritime trade. Political stability fostered the diffusion of a common metrological system, the effective application of common legal rules (especially in the field of commercial law) and the creation of a unitary monetary zone: “a centrally produced coinage circulated almost everywhere, and locally issued coins (chiefly small bronze denominations) were linked to the mainstream coinage by a common system of fixed rates of exchange” (Lo Cascio 2007b, 627). All these “institutions” worked together towards decreasing relevant transaction costs and thus improved economic performance at all levels.

The political and cultural structure of the empire also promoted urbanization – especially evident in the western provinces – as new urban centers were deliberately founded or developed out of other forms of settlement (Morley 2007, 578–80; Scheidel 2007, 74–85). A rough estimate would set the urban residents at about 12% of the empire’s total population. Above all these towns and cities stood Rome, a megalopolis with 1 million inhabitants, whose survival was made possible by the existence of a dedicated supply network managed by the state (*annona*). In Morley’s words (2007, 578), “approximately 10% of Roman subjects were dependent for their food and other resources on the agricultural labor of others and on the efficiency of systems of distribution.” This situation both promoted and was made possible by the production of a comparatively high agricultural surplus and its exchange across large distances. Much the same can be said of the Roman army. Having been converted from a mobile force of conquest into a frontier garrison, it was now primarily charged with protecting the empire from external threats; on the other hand, as the civil wars had made clear, it was a potential menace to internal stability (Gilliver 2007, 183–89). It was therefore essential for emperors to keep it both well supplied and under close control. Together with Rome and the other cities, this represented the other fundamental source of demand that both facilitated and relied on increased surplus production and the development of an effective distribution network (Lo Cascio 2007b, 633–41; Morley 2007, 571–80).

But the imperial state played an even more active role by way of taxation. Taxes came in many different guises:

Essentially ... it was the provinces which had to bear the brunt of Roman state expenditure. Their taxation was based on the *tributum*, which was a *tributum soli*, a land tax, on the one hand, and a *tributum capitis*, a personal tax, on the other. Roman land, i.e. all of Italy and all

non-Italian municipalities with Italian rights, was exempt from land tax; only provincial land was taxed. Roman citizenship applied to the person and did not exempt the land; if, therefore, a Roman citizen owned landed property in the provinces he was liable for tax on it.

Mommsen 1996, 226

Duncan-Jones (1994, 33–46) has estimated the annual budget of the early empire to have been between 832 and 983 million *sestertii*, with about 70–80% of it being spent to support the army. This level of expense had been traditionally covered by way of provincial *tributum* and – especially – by draining external resources through military conquest. However, once *Pax Romana* had brought with it a significant decrease in major offensive campaigns, a better-structured system was required to exact revenue from within the empire – one based on city functionaries, a reliable assessment of property (that is, the provincial *census*) and payment in cash (Hopkins 2009, 183–4; Lo Cascio 2007b, 631).

It has been argued that a very low proportion of the empire's GDP would have been required to cover the imperial budget, thus implying comparatively low levels of taxation (Hopkins 1980 and 1995–6, to be integrated with the observations of Lo Cascio 2007b, 622–5). Against this, Mattingly (2011, 132–8) has characterized Roman taxation as oppressive. But, besides actual figures, what matters here is the fact that taxes were raised in the provinces to be primarily invested in Italy (which was exempted from *tributum*) and the frontier provinces in which armies were stationed. This flow of coined money was in turn coupled by an equal flow of trade, through which taxpayers in the provinces sold their surplus and earned the money with which to pay their taxes. Indeed, this structurally unbalanced taxation system is frequently interpreted as a primal mover behind the increased levels of trade and exchange under the empire (hence known as “taxes and trade” model: Hopkins 1980 and 1995–6). What clearly emerges from this are the multiple levels on which the structure of the early Roman Empire impacted on its economic performance.

Finally, it is worth noting that the emperors possessed their own “private” resources, usually made up of properties (for example, agricultural estates) that had been inherited by testament or acquired through proscriptions/confiscations. This *patrimonium* (patrimony) generated revenue (rents) and was managed by the *fiscus Caesaris*, a treasury established alongside the *aerarium populi Romani* (the original public treasury, which the emperor also effectively controlled by the Flavian period). The *fiscus* was widely employed in public expenditures (for example, donatives to the army, provision of infrastructure), which were ideologically tied to his political role as “father” of the state, an expression of specific qualities like *liberalitas* (generosity) and *indulgentia* (indulgence) (Lo Cascio 2007b, 630–3). Here as elsewhere, the emperor was a powerful economic actor, as he directed resources in ways that exerted an influence on production, distribution and consumption patterns (on this aspect and its relationship with specific categories of analysis derived from NIE see Lo Cascio 2006, esp. 224–5).

3 The mark of the Flavians

Having outlined the economic implications of the imperial structure, we can now look at the specific mark the Flavian rulers left on it. As will become clear, there are recurring patterns, and a general concern for the consolidation and stability of the Roman state

seems to have been paramount in the political conduct of all three of them. However, the specific attitude to these concerns varied widely and was differently perceived: from the revenue-maximizing policies of Vespasian to the generosity of Titus, to the rapacity of Domitian. It is therefore worth exploring their acts as the outcome of individual political visions.

3.1 *Vespasian (69–79)*

“The empire, which for quite some time had been unsteady and almost staggering because of the uprising and violent death of three emperors, was eventually taken over and consolidated by the Flavian family” (Suet. *Vesp.* 1). The very first lines of Suetonius’ biographical account of the Flavian emperors provides a very neat impression of the place that historiography has since assigned them to. The Year of the Four Emperors (69) had triggered an empire-wide political crisis that had violated the crucial principle on which the Principate rested ideologically: imperial peace (see above). The death of Vitellius in itself did not immediately restore it, either in Rome (Tac. *Hist.* 4.1) or elsewhere: armed dissidence had been mounting in Britain, Germany and – especially – Judea, while neighboring peoples were taking advantage of this temporary weakness by pressing on Moesia and the African provinces (Levick 1999, 107–23). It is therefore not surprising that Vespasian, early in his reign, took pains not merely to re-establish peace, but also to advertise its return through coinage issues, the closing the gates of the Temple of Janus Geminus in 70, and the building of the Temple of Peace, construction of which began the following year (see CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 2.1). In order to restore confidence in the state it was equally important to stress both continuity with earlier “good” *principes* and the prospect of a peaceful and secure succession (see CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 3). Even his building initiatives advertised continuity with his good predecessors: not only the resumption and completion of the Temple of the Deified Claudius (whose construction had been discontinued by Nero to make room for his own *Domus Aurea*), but also the project for a great amphitheater in the center of Rome, which was supposedly related to an earlier plan cherished by Augustus himself (Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1). Vespasian conducted a *census*, the last recorded in Roman history, in 73 with Titus as his colleague. This was also aligned with the political example set by both Augustus (28 BCE, 8 BCE and 14 CE) and Claudius (47 CE).

But Vespasian understood that such image-making, no matter how effective and well received, had to be coupled with a thorough fiscal policy of revenue maximization. Besides Nero’s uncontrolled level of expenditure, the ensuing civil war had further drained resources and damaged installations, to say nothing of the lost tax revenue and the exceptional military expenses the whole situation had caused (Levick 1999, 96). Although his fiscal zeal was perceived among many of his contemporaries as “lust for money” (*pecuniae cupiditas*), others understood those acts as a necessary response to the desperate state of both the *aerarium* and the *fiscus*: Vespasian himself had declared that 4 billion sesterces – about five times the ordinary annual budget (see above) – were needed if the state was to survive (the actual amount reported at Suet. *Vesp.* 16.3 is *quadrigentis milies*, or 40 billion *sestertii*, but *quadrigentis* is usually emended to *quadragies*, giving a total of 4 billion: see Levick 1999, 95 and 237 n. 1). Tax revenues represented

the core source of state income, and the gravity of the situation was such that it required the emperor not only to increase imposts, but also to both revive old and introduce new ones. The level of provincial tribute was accordingly raised (doubled in some cases) and taxes suppressed by Galba were restored (Suet. *Vesp.* 16.1; denying the legitimacy of Galba's policies also fell within Vespasian's broader strategy of personal legitimization at the expense of former competitors: see Levick 1999, 72–3). A particularly striking measure was the imposition of a new tax on public urinals in Rome, which became notorious thanks to Vespasian's retort to a disdainful Titus that money so accrued “does not smell” (Suet. *Vesp.* 23.3; Cass. Dio 65.14.4). This tax was probably imposed on those private enterprises that had an interest in collecting and employing such wastes, such as laundries, and the leather industry in general (Levick 1999, 101; on the broader economic aspects pertaining to urination and defecation see Flohr and Wilson 2011).

In addition to replenishing the *aerarium populi Romani* and the *fiscus Caesaris*, two new special treasuries – and associated taxes – were instituted: the *fiscus Alexandrinus* and the *fiscus Judaicus*. The former was charged with collecting poll tax from citizens of Alexandria, who, unlike the rest of Egypt, had been hitherto exempted. The latter involved the appropriation by the Roman state of an annual contribution that all Jews had previously paid in for the upkeep of the Temple of Jerusalem (now destroyed): such revenue was therefore claimed for the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol in Rome (Levick 1999, 101).

Tax income could be increased by other means too. As provincial communities were granted the *ius Latii* or Latin right (for example, to Spanish cities in 73/74), their magistrates acquired Roman citizenship: although no more subjected to poll tax, they still had to pay land tax and were now liable for inheritance and manumission taxes. Many more Roman citizen taxpayers were created by founding colonies or by elevating existing towns to such status. Further revenues were obtained by extending provincial tax to newly acquired regions, such as Commagene, or by re-annexing provincial territories that Nero had freed from direct control (Achaëa, Lycia). Although these measures had an undeniable economic impact, it is unclear whether or not economic considerations were the primary motivation behind them (Griffin 2000, 27; Leveau 2007, 666; Levick 1999, 102).

Fiscal considerations were unquestionably paramount in Vespasian's decision to conduct a census (see above), along with a more general survey of state properties across the empire. The devastating fire on the Capitol (69 CE) had destroyed the *Tabularium* (the central imperial archive) and this accident provided a good opportunity for a more thorough reckoning – and organization – of public and imperial lands. The origin of the *Corpus Agrimensorum*, a comprehensive collection of technical treatises by Roman land surveyors, has indeed been dated to the early years of Vespasian's reign (Chouquer and Favory 2001, 29–37). These initiatives rectified unclear situations (for example, boundaries and status of land), promoted an extension of cultivated land, and no doubt impacted the way imperial properties everywhere were managed and exploited (on the management of imperial properties under Vespasian, see further Maiuro 2009; Hirt 2010, 332–56). A case in point is the *Lex Manciana*, preserved on an inscription dating to the early second century, which addresses tenancy agreements for newly cleared lands on imperial estates in North Africa. This law is probably, though not certainly, of Flavian origin (see Levick 1999, 100–1). The best documented example of an intervention by Vespasian

comes from southern Gaul and is represented by the cadastre of Arausio (datable to 77 CE), an impressive marble plan depicting the very layout of the colonial territory, and specifying status, ownership, and value of the individual plots (Piganiol 1962). Also noteworthy is the attempt to recover Italian *subseciva*, that is, those public lands that had been left unassigned when colonies were first established, and came to be illegally occupied by private individuals over the centuries. Vespasian's intention, after repossession, was to distribute these lands for the benefit of his *fiscus*. In the event, though, the protests of the occupiers were so vociferous that he abandoned his plans (this is reported by Frontinus and Hyginus in the *Corpus Agrimensorum* T 41, 96-7; Latin text and English translation at Campbell 2000, 38 and 98).

Very early in his reign Vespasian lowered the metal content in issued currency. In this he was quietly following the precedent set by Nero, a figure from whom he generally strove to dissociate himself. In 64 CE Nero had reduced both the weight and the silver content of the *denarius*, probably out of need for higher public expenditures following the Great Fire of Rome. In 70 Vespasian, pressed by serious financial constraints, resorted to further silver content reduction while maintaining the Neronian weight, an effective solution (Walker 1976, 25, 111-5; for a helpful general discussion of monetary manipulations in the Roman world see Howgego 1995, 115-21).

His reputation for pecuniary rapacity notwithstanding, Vespasian's concerted efforts to raise revenues were largely aimed at prompt investment in public expenditures (Suet. *Vesp.* 17-19). His ambitious building program created employment opportunities for contractors and workers at all levels. The importance of this aspect is illustrated by the well-known anecdote, reported at Suet. *Vesp.* 18, of a mechanical engineer whose labor-saving invention Vespasian declined to use on the grounds that it would have deprived poor workers of their livelihood (on the episode see Brunt 1980; Finley 1985, 75; Lo Cascio 2007b, 633).

Vespasian's cultural patronage and economic support throughout the empire – extended to individuals and communities alike – constituted an effective means of advertising the course of imperial progress (Levick 1999, 124-51). As Levick (1999, 151) notes, “economic advance was due primarily to confidence in the peaceful background and secure future it provided.” After all, Vespasian had made it clear at the outset that it would be possible to embellish the state only after it had been strengthened (Suet. *Vesp.* 8).

3.2 Titus (79-81)

The emperor Titus inherited from his father both a well-funded treasury and a consolidated empire. He was clearly aware of these accomplishments, as he had been associated in power with Vespasian from the outset, and continuity in policies was a natural consequence. During his father's reign, as Jones (1984, 140) notes, “Titus was undoubtedly influential in the formulation of administrative policy, and it was to be expected that, on his accession, no radical changes would occur.” Essential continuity is evident in the fact that the new *princeps* both kept the debased *denarius* and tried once again (unsuccessfully) to recover Italian *subseciva* (see section 3.1).

At the same time, Titus individuated his brief reign through a personal and programmatic liberality that marked a departure from his father's reputation for fiscal zeal (Griffin

2000, 51; Jones 1984, 140). As it happened, he had only too many opportunities to display his celebrated generosity. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 obliterated three towns – Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae – together with a sizable part of the countryside of Campania, one of the most thriving regions in Italy. Titus promptly dispatched two officials of consular rank to supervise the reconstruction process (*curatores restituendae Campaniae*), which was funded in part by the estates of those who had died in the eruption without leaving heirs. This was a conspicuous act of imperial *liberalitas* as patrimonies without heirs (*bona vacantia*) were automatically inherited by the *fiscus*. Titus showed a similar generosity after a great fire ravaged Rome the following year, donating ornaments from his own villas to adorn the newly restored buildings (Suet. *Tit.* 8.3-4). The magnificent celebrations for the completion of the Flavian Amphitheater and the nearby baths (Suet. *Tit.* 7.3) were no doubt meant to boost morale: “with recent natural disasters – the eruption of Vesuvius, the accompanying shortage of food, the severe epidemic and the fire that ravaged parts of Rome – civilian morale must have been at a low ebb, a fact that Titus was too wise to neglect” (Jones 1984, 144).

Titus’ generosity was not limited to Rome or Italy, but manifested itself across the empire (Jones 1984, 144–5). From this point of view, it is suggestive that he ratified in a single edict all the privileges (*beneficia*) that earlier emperors had conferred upon individuals and communities: this was contrary to a custom established by Tiberius that each case be examined and confirmed separately (Suet. *Tit.* 8.1). He also generously extended such privileges to new recipients. In general, Titus endeavored to convey the image of a “fatherly” emperor (*parentis affectus*: Suet. *Tit.* 8.3), who had both the inclination and the means to provide for the people, whatever disaster might befall them. This of course had the beneficial effect of promoting confidence and reducing uncertainty, crucial variables – we have seen – in any analysis of economic performance.

3.3 Domitian (81–96)

There are no signs that Titus’ level of public expenditure left his successor in a bad situation. Quite to the contrary, the earlier years of Domitian’s reign are marked by a series of initiatives that could only have been possible with a healthy treasury. Whatever the personal relationship between the two brothers (Suet. *Tit.* 9.3; *Dom.* 2.3), the issue of succession was prepared and handled with the same care as in 79. Titus had always proclaimed his brother partner and successor, and Domitian himself eventually stressed his own *pietas* by completing the Temple of the Deified Vespasian and including his brother in the dedication (hence *Templum Vespasiani et Titi*). His ambitious building program brought to completion not only the restoration of what had been damaged by the fire of 80, but also all the other projects that his predecessors had started and left outstanding (Suet. *Dom.* 5; Griffin 2000, 56–60; Jones 1992, 79–98). Domitian’s decision to give the soldiery a significant raise in salary in 83/84 was probably judicious for, unlike Vespasian and Titus, he lacked a strong connection with the army, whose support was crucial to any emperor; at the same time, though, it placed a heavy burden on his budget (Suet. *Dom.* 7.2; Cass. Dio 67.3.5; for a comprehensive overview, see Southern 1997, 65–7).

At least initially, Domitian pursued a path much like his brother’s, exercising *liberalitas* at all levels. In addition to the measures already mentioned, he supported the arts, made

donations to the people, and financed lavish entertainments (Suet. *Dom.* 4). He even went beyond his predecessors in definitively abandoning the idea of reclaiming the *subseciva* from their occupants (Suet. *Dom.* 9.3; Griffin 2000, 71).

In 82, Domitian departed from established Flavian monetary policy by increasing the silver content of the *denarius*, reverting to a standard of fineness that had not been seen since the time of Augustus (Walker 1976, 115). As Griffin (2000, 72) points out, this reform was probably not meant to impress the general public, something that could have been better achieved by increasing the coin's overall weight rather than its percentage of silver. It certainly meant something to Domitian, inasmuch as this marked a return to the standards of the founding *princeps*. Although it is difficult to see an economic motive as paramount, this measure was bound to have an economic impact.

It is indeed generally accepted that the high levels of expenditure early in his reign eventually forced Domitian to change his approach in fiscal matters: Suetonius characterizes him as becoming "rapacious by need" (*inopia rapax*, *Dom.* 3.2). The new concern for austerity was further driven by the costs of several military campaigns, including one to quell an internal uprising led by one of his own provincial governors, L. Antonius Saturninus of Upper Germany (Jones 1992, 126–59). Already in 85, Domitian's "Augustan" monetary restoration had to be scaled back, though only to the Neronian standard, which still represented an improvement on previous Flavian practice (Walker 1976, 115–6). Domitian also became stricter in exacting tributes, as seen in his handling of the *fiscus Iudaicus* (see CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, sections 4–5) and the collection of rentals for water rights in Rome (Frontin. *Aq.* 2.116–8). He is also reputed to have resorted to widespread confiscations that made him hateful to the wealthy: of course properties were confiscated "for a variety of reasons, only one of which may have been financial" (Southern 1997, 61). It is possible that, within the overall policy of acquisition, Domitian was pursuing a coherent strategy vis-à-vis imperial holdings in Italy, targeting in particular the Tiber Valley and Istria, with an eye to gaining the direct capacity to supply both the city of Rome and the armies stationed along the Danube (Maiuro 2009, 336–40). Whatever the case, his later autocratic and oppressive conduct did not help to create secure conditions on property ownership and this, in the long term, was likely to affect the confidence and overall performance of many of those who had the means to invest in the economy.

The above remarks do not in any way contradict the widely held view of Domitian as a careful administrator (see CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, section 5). He demanded scrupulous administration from his officials, both in Rome and in the provinces: Suetonius deems magistrates never to have been more honest and just than they were in his reign (*Dom.* 12.2). One might be tempted to see the so-called "vine edict" (Suet. *Dom.* 7.2; Stat. *Silv.* 4.3.11–2; according to Tchernia 1986, 229–30, there would have been two distinct edicts) as an instance of such careful administration. Even more than that, the fact that, following a grain shortage coupled with a plentiful wine crop, Domitian had thought about forbidding the planting of new vineyards in Italy whilst threatening to eradicate half of those located in the provinces has been read as a sign of an intentional economic policy aimed at protecting Italian agriculture from provincial competition (Rostovtzeff 1957, 202–3; also Tchernia 1986, 221–33). This last hypothesis is probably excessive (Jones 1984, 77–9; also Finley 1985, 244 n. 47) and the whole episode is better explained by considering traditional concerns about the grain

supply, which might have suggested the adoption of a measure “designed to discourage dependence on hazardous imports and encourage increased production to meet local needs” (Griffin 2000, 79). There may also have been traces of a moral or religious agenda (that is, reversing the neglect of the goddess Ceres) at work. Whatever the case, the vine edict was never enforced.

On the whole, the evidence suggests that Domitian administrative machinery was kept in good order and that his reign was financially sound. As Griffin (2000, 76) points out, “the ancient writers do not assert that Domitian failed to balance his budget, only that he did so in ways that were oppressive and unjust.”

4 Economic performance: established trends and new developments

The impression one gets from examining the three Flavian emperors is that each of them – albeit in his own fashion – helped to consolidate the foundations on which the empire rested: a solid tax-generated budget that made it possible to secure “peaceful” conditions (for example, a trusted army to handle both external and internal threats) and inspire confidence among the subjects (for example, the many acts of imperial *liberalitas*). In NIE terms, all of this resulted in a reduction of “uncertainty” and of relevant transaction costs, thus boosting the overall economic performance of the Roman empire. As with all autocratic regimes, these benefits came at the expense of personal and collective liberties, and were ultimately based on a potential resort to violent coercion. It is also true that these benefits did not affect everyone in the same way, with the higher socio-economic strata benefiting disproportionately, as they generally did in Roman history. The regional picture, though, is perhaps more surprising.

A study of the relative proportion of wine amphorae at several archaeological sites in Rome and Ostia shows a long-term rise in provincial imports at the expense of Italian products. This pattern, attested already during the Augustan period, had apparently stabilized by the mid-first century CE, only to “spike” again – in favor of provincial wine – in the Flavian Age (Panella and Tchernia 1994, 155). It is likely that this reflects in part the disastrous impact of Vesuvius’ eruption on Campanian viticulture. But there is little doubt that provincial producers proved ready to acquire that share of the market and – judging from later developments – to expand their presence. This process can be better appreciated if one further explores the implications of empire according to the “taxes and trade” model discussed above. The structural imbalance in the flow of money from tax producing to tax consuming regions was bound to generate differential levels of monetization (i.e. lower in the periphery, higher in the core). This was even more true for Italy, whose inhabitants had been exempted from both poll and land tax since 167 BCE. The concentration of coined money there made for higher prices/costs than elsewhere across the empire. It therefore became more convenient to produce in the provinces to sell in Italy (Lo Cascio 1991, 351–65; von Freyberg 1988). This dynamic was to exert quite a negative influence on the performance of the Italian economy to the (further) benefit of the provinces (Launaro 2011, 177–83). Indeed, immediately following the Flavian period, signs of distress among the Italian population appear, as the *alimenta* scheme

was first introduced to support poor children in at least fifty urban communities (this may also been intended to encourage agricultural investment in Italy: see Lo Cascio 2000, 221-311).

If the above diagnosis is correct, there is hardly any other period in Roman history when such conditions combined more effectively than in the Flavian Age. All three emperors not only consolidated the taxation system (and the underlying flux of revenues), but favored trade/exchange by restoring peace and a “zealous-but-fair” pattern of provincial government. Even more than that, their *liberalitas* had conferred – and confirmed – privileges in Italy *as much as* abroad, thus further encouraging urbanization and confidence in private ventures in the provinces themselves. Of course, this was not the result of an intentional economic policy aimed at questioning the role of Italy within the empire: far from it. But it was self-evident to the Flavian emperors that healthier provinces would make for larger and more secure tax revenues, a fundamental condition for – among other things – enabling Roman citizens in Italy to enjoy their political (fiscal) privileges. It is simply that they did not appreciate the fullest economic implications of this. In the final analysis, then, the economic impact of Flavian rule was to bring to maturation all those processes and dynamics that the intrinsically exploitative structure of the Roman empire had always involved. Italy, the land of the conquerors, was just beginning to lose its primacy – and not just in economic terms – within the empire.

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FURTHER READING

For the recent adoption of a theoretical framework informed by the *New Institutional Economics*, see Morris and Weingast (2004), and Morris, Saller and Scheidel (2007). Kehoe (2007) offers a theoretically informed analytical presentation of the whole range of activities involved in the economy of the early Roman Empire. Mattingly (2006) provides an analytical presentation of the whole range of activities involved in the economy of the Roman Empire. A seminal work on the economy of the early Roman Empire, and still a valuable read, is Jongman (1988), based on evidence from Pompeii – most of which, of course, dates to the Flavian period. Scheidel (2010) and (2012) offer an up-to-date synthesis on current approaches to the Roman economy in general. Lo Cascio (2012), written in Italian, provides a theoretically informed analysis of the Flavian contribution to the performance of the early imperial economy.

CHAPTER 11

Frontiers, Security, and Military Policy

Christopher J. Dart

Introduction

Understanding the dynamic nature of military operations on the Roman empire's frontiers during the Flavian era requires more than the study of a physical border; it involves understanding a network of military resources and infrastructure that had evolved over time and continued to change. Under the Flavians and indeed, throughout the first century CE, the Roman frontiers were not simply directed outward, as a protective boundary between the empire and the rest of the inhabited world. The armies of the frontiers were expected to respond to external and internal crises alike, providing for both the security of the empire and its defense from external threats.

A number of related issues need to be considered when studying the frontiers under the Flavians. First, Roman frontier regions had different military needs dictated by local geography, pre-existing infrastructure, and access to resources, as well as regional internal and external political considerations. The needs on the Rhine were different from those along the Danube or indeed, those of the East and Flavian frontier policy naturally took into account those differences. Second, as with their predecessors, the Flavians readily took advantage of opportunities as they arose to extend or enhance Roman control in frontier regions. Thus, under the Flavians there was a major offensive in Britain, new networks of roads and forts were constructed on the far sides of the Rhine and Danube as well as in North Africa and the East, and a number of client kingdoms were annexed. Third, the Flavians' management of the frontiers did not represent a radical break with earlier Roman military practice, which had at its disposal the basic tools of asserting control over frontier regions. This was particularly true on the Rhine and Danube, where the Romans were already utilizing a combination of natural features (such as rivers, forests, mountains, and oceans), man-made infrastructure (such as roads, forts, earthworks, harbors, and canals), shipping networks, and exclusion zones to assert control (Tac. *Ann.* 13.54; continued use evidenced by Cass. Dio 72.16). It should also

be noted that some Roman frontier positions moved little after the Flavians and indeed, became increasingly entrenched in the following century. This is not, however, necessarily evidence that the Flavians and their successors ever envisaged an empire protected by static frontiers or a new, defensive, role for the empire's legions and other military forces (see: Isaac 1990, 387–94; Whittaker 1994 and 2004, 28–46).

1 Ancient and modern concepts of Roman “frontiers”

Defining the physical and conceptual boundaries of the Roman empire prior to the mid-second century CE is a problem with which modern scholarship has frequently grappled. This is in part because until at least the second century the empire did not possess clearly defined boundaries. The *provinciae* (provinces) of the empire had precise geographic boundaries insofar as they demarcated the jurisdictional authority of one Roman magistrate or commander from the next. But on the periphery of the empire there were zones over which Roman power was exercised with diminishing levels of oversight and control. These areas involved a diverse mix of communities, peoples, and kingdoms each with their own unique relationship to the Romans.

The Latin word *limes* (pl. *limites*) is commonly applied to the Roman frontiers. During the Republic, *limes* had referred to the access-ways between plots of farmland. The term came to be increasingly used in a military context, but even in the works of Flavian era writers, such as Frontinus and Tacitus, the term still refers to military access-ways that extended into enemy territory, rather than a fixed “frontier” or “border” as conceived for a modern state (Tac. *Ann.* 1.50; Frontin. *Str.* 1.3.10). It was not until at least a century after the Flavians that the word *limes* acquired the meaning with which modern readers would be familiar, that of a fixed frontier to the empire (Isaac 1988). And while writers of the mid-second century CE, such as Aelius Aristides and Appian, describe the empire of their day as ringed by defending armies, Mattern (1999) has argued that such statements reflect the increasing deployment of soldiers on the empire's periphery rather than an empire which had come to see itself as either static or militarily defensive.

Edward Luttwak's *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire* (1976) has become an indispensable part of modern scholarly debate about the nature and function of Roman frontiers, although frequently as a counterpoint (see Millar 1982; Isaac 1988; Whittaker 1994 and 2004, 28–46; Mattern 1999, 109–22; Isaac 1990, 387–94). Luttwak argued that shifting zones of expansion in the early first century evolved into static defensive frontiers in the second century. This eventually led to a disastrously ineffective strategy of defense in the third century, a shift from “forward” defense to “rearward” defense-in-depth (Luttwak 1976, 127–36). Luttwak argued this was the product of a centrally directed and consciously developed policy over several centuries, in which the Flavians were of particular significance. While Luttwak rightly recognized that the army remained a mobile strike force that “operated in a tactically offensive manner” (Luttwak 1976, 66 and 80), he argued that the Flavians inaugurated a new strategy of “perimeter defense” based on increasingly static linear frontiers. This putative new strategy, it is argued, “required an investment of colossal proportions over the course of three centuries” (Luttwak 1976, 61–2).

Since its publication in 1976, the “grand strategy” theory as conceived by Luttwak has come under frequent attack from archaeologists and ancient historians alike (see surveys

in Whittaker 2004, 28–49; Kagan 2006). In particular, the argument that the Roman Empire possessed increasingly static linear frontiers that were defensive in nature has been frequently challenged from a number of perspectives. First, the lack of substantial movement of some frontiers after the Flavian era is not in itself evidence of a change in mindset to fixed frontiers or a defensive grand strategy. Second, Luttwak's theory is not easily squared with numerous foreign wars waged well beyond the empire's frontiers, such as the campaigns waged deep into Dacia or the Parthian and Persian empires. Third, in some regions, particularly in the East, Roman military deployments may have been at least as much directed toward asserting local control as they were to "external" threats (Isaac 1990, Millar 1993). Finally, Mattern (1999) has argued that the "grand strategy" theory involves an overly simplistic interpretation of Roman motivations and decision-making processes. While most critics have challenged Luttwak's central premises, his monograph has galvanized the debate for decades, and, flaws notwithstanding, it continues to offer worthwhile elements (Wheeler 1993); it has, for instance, recently been argued that a notion of "grand strategy" can be usefully applied to Roman decisions on the movement and allocation of military resources (Kagan 2006).

2 Frontier management prior to 69 CE

Throughout the first century CE the Romans employed a system of mobile standing armies. In general, detachments drawn from the legions (*vexillationes*) and/or supporting auxiliary units were stationed at strategic positions, with a major fortress established to serve as a central base of operations for the legion. Legions were set up to respond to both external and internal crises as they arose, moving to engage the enemy. Both the size of the available force and its capacity to respond rapidly (which depended on up-to-date information, swift communication, and good physical infrastructure) constituted effective deterrents (Luttwak 1976, 7–60; Isaac 1990; Whittaker 1994 and 2004; Mattern 1999, 81–122; Thorne 2007, 228–9; Wheeler 2007). This system was of course vulnerable to internal disruptions: on several occasions between 68 and 71 the perceived weakening and ill-preparedness of the empire's armies signaled an opportunity to various challengers.

Over the course of the first century CE there was an increasing movement of legions to outer regions of the empire, particularly to the Rhine and Danube. Such redeployments were most dramatic in the Spanish provinces, where there were possibly as many as five legions in the immediate aftermath of Augustus' wars on the Iberian Peninsula. The number was three by late in Augustus' reign (Strab. 3.4.20) and had been reduced to one by the reign of Nero. For some modern scholars this movement of soldiers has been interpreted as indicating a transition from forces of occupation to forces of defense (Luttwak 1976; cf. Isaac 1990, 101–218).

Roman control was extended to the Rhine during Caesar's command in Gaul (58–50 BCE). The river was a conceptual boundary and a de facto frontier but little more than that until late in the first century BCE. Campaigns fought over the Rhine between 16 and 13 BCE were probably the trigger for the first instances of long-term stationing of legions in the vicinity of the river (Schönberger 1969). Initially, legionaries and auxiliaries were likely stationed together in forts. These were constructed to facilitate active campaigning,

were of irregular shape and frequently placed to take advantage of waterways for transport (see Schönberger 1969, 144–51; von Schnurbein 2000, 29–35). During the first century CE the Roman military continued to wage campaigns across the river and, when possible, to project Roman power further eastward into the region between the rivers Rhine and Elbe. By the time of Augustus' death in 14 CE, there were eight legions stationed in the two "Germanies," four along the upper Rhine in the region of what would later become the province of *Germania Superior* and four on the lower Rhine, in *Germania Inferior* (Tac. *Ann.* 1.31, 4.5). Operations carried out by these legions were facilitated by a sophisticated military infrastructure that was gradually built-up under the Julio-Claudians. For instance, in response to German attacks in 16 CE on a Roman fort (possibly that of Aliso), Germanicus constructed what Tacitus terms *limites* (in this context almost certainly to be translated as delimiting "access-ways") and earthworks between the fort of Aliso and the Rhine (Tac. *Ann.* 2.7). While designed to "protect" Roman assets, these works were not part of a defensive strategy, but were intended to facilitate an aggressive campaign to conquer *Germania Magna* and extend Roman control to the region around the Elbe River (Tac. *Ann.* 2.41; Strab. 7.1.3–4). The construction of permanent legionary fortresses in the vicinity of the Rhine seems to have occurred principally from the reign of Claudius onward.

To the east of the Rhine, campaigns carried out under Augustus had asserted Roman power over the regions along the southern bank of the Danube (Aug. *RG* 30). Thereafter the river became the principle physical limit to Roman power between the sources of the Rhine and the Black Sea. The regions of Raetia, Noricum, Pannonia, and Moesia were organized into provinces under Augustus with the Danube as their northern frontier. Here, as on the Rhine, the river was used as a line of demarcation and also as a means of facilitating efficient communication and transport. Campaigns were waged across the river in protection of the new provinces. Under Augustus the provinces along the Rhine–Danube frontier had been under the command of imperial appointees (*legati Augusti pro praetore*). Moesia had been administered by a *praefectus* attached to the province of Macedonia from 29 BCE (Cass. Dio 51.25.1). Its first imperial *legatus* was appointed between 2 and 6 CE. Pannonia was placed under the command of *legati Augusti pro praetore* from 9 CE.

During the early Empire, the situation on the frontiers in the East was quite different. Most eastern provinces were also placed under the command of imperial appointees by Augustus, with Asia and Bithynia noteworthy exceptions. Beyond the outer provinces, however, were a number of client kingdoms that were served as buffer states for the Romans. Of these the kingdoms Greater and Lesser Armenia became of particular importance, following the campaigns of L. Licinius Lucullus and Cn. Pompeius Magnus. Greater Armenia maintained a delicate balance between the Parthian monarchy to its southeast and Rome to its west. Lesser Armenia, however, had a sequence of unsuccessful arrangements that concluded with Vespasian's decision to incorporate it into the province of Cappadocia (circa 71/72).

In North Africa, Roman power had long remained largely restricted to coastal regions. Egypt was commanded by an imperial prefect, while the provinces of *Cyrenaica* and *Africa Proconsularis* were under senatorial appointees. Further west was the client kingdom of Mauretania. Under the Julio-Claudians, the Romans constructed an impressive network of military roads and forts stretching ever further southward and westward.

As along the Rhine and Danube, this infrastructure was often developed in response to particular threats. A case in point is the network of forts established by Q. Junius Blaesus in Africa to counter Tacfarinas' ongoing raids in 21 CE (Tac. *Ann.* 3.74).

Under Claudius and Nero the empire made a number of substantial territorial expansions, which would have significant repercussions for Flavian frontier policy. In North Africa in 44 CE Claudius annexed the former client kingdom of Mauretania. Parts of southern Britain were initially subdued under Claudius, with consolidation of the Roman presence on the island under Nero. Claudius had also annexed Thrace in 46, resulting in an increased Roman military presence in the Black Sea region. Under Nero, Roman intervention in the client kingdoms of the East had led to significant extensions of Roman control over Asia Minor and culminated in a realignment of the power relationship with both Armenia and Parthia through the compromise brokered by Cn. Domitius Corbulo (Vervaeke 2000 and 2003). Nero also annexed the kingdom of Pontus in 64. That kingdom had enforced order on the Black Sea; as a result of its annexation a Roman fleet, the *classis Pontica*, was established to police the region (Starr 1960, 125–9). Between 62 and 64 Nero had intervened in the affairs of the Bosphoran kingdom on the northern Black Sea and may have entertained the idea of annexation.

3 Frontiers and military policy under the Flavians

Typically, Roman *actions* on the frontiers are far more clearly preserved in ancient literary source material than is the underlying *rationale* for those actions. Modern scholarship is frequently divided as to the fundamental motivations or the anticipated outcomes of frontier policies as a result. Decisions taken about the deployment of troops, the construction of infrastructure or the geopolitical affairs of frontier regions often defy the simple dichotomy defense/offense. Many of the Flavian initiatives on the frontiers offered complementary benefits to the empire, enhancing the means of defense while facilitating aggressive actions. What does emerge from detailed examination is that Vespasian and his sons were judicious frontier architects.

Upon coming to power, the Flavians were confronted with a complex set of problems. The losses of the civil war needed to be made good, and the frontier armies brought back up to strength. At the same time Vespasian decided on the disbandment of four legions, after their disgrace in the Batavian War: *I Germanica*, *IV Macedonica*, *XI Primigenia*, and *XVI Gallica*. Two of these legions were replaced by the newly created legions *IV Flavia Felix* and *XVI Flavia Firma*. The net result was, after about 75 CE, a total strength of 29 legions for the empire as a whole (see APPENDIX 3). There was also a series of significant redeployments of legions.

In addition to such fundamental matters, the Flavians needed to address the recent civil war and the role that frontier armies had played in it. The civil war had exposed problems with existing frontier deployments. First, it had drawn great numbers of soldiers away from the Rhine, Danube, and the East. The revolt of Vindex in Gaul in 68 had required the legions of *Germania Superior* to suppress it. Aulus Vitellius had then taken a sizable portion of the Rhine legions with him to Italy to challenge Galba and then Otho (Tac. *Hist.* 1.51–2). This dangerous reduction in the Roman military presence and the sense that Italy was now in a state of disorder had encouraged in the later

part of 69 the revolt of Julius Civilis in *Germania Inferior*. Similarly, the reduction of the military presence on the Danube had emboldened Dacian and Sarmatian groups to make incursions into Moesia and threaten the stability of the Ilyrian provinces in 69 and 70. What averted a similar situation in the East was that Vespasian had secured the support of not only the governors of Syria and Egypt, but also the acquiescence of the Parthian king Vologaeses before sending legions westward to fight Vitellius on his behalf (Suet. *Vesp.* 6). Second, the civil war had pitted provincial governors and their legions against one another, with frontier armies taking it upon themselves to either nominate an emperor or to assert a local leader. Thus, the army in Spain had put forward Galba, Aulus Vitellius had been in command of the legions in Lower Germany when he had been acclaimed emperor (Suet. *Vit.* 7-8), and in the East the legions declared for Vespasian.

One way to mitigate such dangers was to appoint loyal commanders, and the Flavians certainly did this. At the same time, Vespasian attempted where possible to put in place longer-term solutions. Thus, from this time onward the legions of *Germania Inferior* were no longer stationed together, a change no doubt driven by sound military calculation, but no less crucially reducing the risk of conspiracy among large concentrations of frontier legions.

Under Claudius and Nero there had been extensions of the territories over which the Romans exercised direct control; the Flavian era saw further expansion, particularly in Britain, where a succession of governors pushed further westward into Wales and northward into Scotland. In addition, control was asserted over sections of land between the Rhine and Danube, and Nero's reorganization of the East was continued and completed. As under Claudius and Nero, client kingdoms that either no longer effectively acted as buffer states or which could be expediently acquired were annexed and incorporated into the Roman provincial system. Such extensions of Roman control necessitated a more significant (and visible) military presence on the frontiers and, with that, the construction of new infrastructure. Under Domitian the Danube was afforded an increased military presence. This necessitated a reduction of the forces committed to Britain (which would contribute to the emergence of a fixed frontier in the second century) and also the gradual reduction of the military presence on the Rhine.

4 Detailed analysis by region

4.1 Rhine

The events of the civil war played a significant role in shaping Vespasian's early policy along the Rhine. In 68 there had been seven legions deployed along the river. In the region of *Germania Superior* under the command of Hordeonius Flaccus there were three: *IV Macedonica* and *XXII Primigenia* based at Moguntiacum (modern Mainz, Germany), and further south *XXI Rapax* based at Vindonissa (modern Windisch, Switzerland). Under the command of Aulus Vitellius in *Germania Inferior* there had been four: *I Germanica* based at Bonna (modern Bonn), *V Alaudae* and *XV Primigenia* at Vetera, and *XVI Gallica* based at Novaesium (modern Neuss), (see Tac. *Ann.* 4.5; Schönberger 1969; Elton 1996, 45). Vitellius sent a significant part of the Rhine armies to Italy in 69; Tacitus claims that this force consisted in total of 70 000 men (*Hist.* 1.61).

The removal of soldiers and heavy-handed attempts to conscript local auxiliaries furnished Julius Civilis with both the occasion and the pretext for a local rebellion (Tac. *Hist.* 4.14). In 69 Civilis laid siege to the legionary camp at Vetera and a number of Roman military sites showing evidence of destruction have been associated with the period (Schönberger 1969, 154–5). In 70, Q. Petilius Cerialis and Annius Gallus were sent by Vespasian to reassert Roman control over the Germanies, defeating Civilis' army near Augusta Treverorum in the same year.

Vespasian undertook a substantial reorganization of the two Germanies after the suppression of Civilis' revolt. Fortresses were rebuilt or relocated, the four legions of *Germania Inferior* were now spread across four separate locations, and in *Germania Superior* a fourth legion was added. In addition, a number of new roads were constructed (Schönberger 1969, 155–6). In *Germania Inferior*, the destroyed fortress at Vetera was not rebuilt, but rather in its place a new fortress was constructed a short distance away, closer to the Rhine, and now for only one legion. At this site *XXII Primigenia* was stationed, moved from its former base at Moguntiacum in *Germania Superior*. A new fortress was built northwest of Vetera at Noviomagus (modern Nijmegen) at which *XII Gemina* was stationed. At Novaesium *VI Victrix* was installed and at Bonna *XXI Rapax* was stationed, also transferred from *Germania Superior*.

In *Germania Superior* the number of legions was raised by Vespasian from three to four. Two legions, *I Adiutrix* and *XIV Gemina* were initially stationed at Moguntiacum. The legion *IV Macedonica* previously stationed at the city was disbanded for having sided against the Flavian cause. At Argentorate (modern Strasbourg, France) *VIII Augusta* was now stationed, the first time a legion had been based at the city since Claudius' campaign in Britain in 43 CE. At Vindonissa *XI Claudia* was stationed to replace the legion *XXI Rapax*. *XI Claudia* had been previously stationed at Burnum in Dalmatia. The legion had supported Vespasian at the second battle of Bedriacum and subsequently served in Cerialis' suppression of Julius Civilis in 70.

The reasons for such deployments were probably diverse. Careful placement of legions of proven loyalty was a prudent step in light of the events of the civil war. And, in addition to reducing the risk of rebellions by concentrations of legions, the presence of more dispersed armies with better infrastructure might also serve as a deterrent to both local upstarts and external foes. These redeployments were accompanied in the 70s by the construction of roads and smaller forts on the far side of the Rhine: these policies are consistent with initiatives taken in other parts of the empire by the Flavians.

As early as 73 Vespasian took steps to annex the wedged-shaped section of land formed between the upper reaches of the Rhine and Danube, known as the *Agri Decumates*. The legate in Upper Germany, Cn. Cornelius Clemens progressively constructed roads, forts, and earthworks to facilitate Roman control of the region, including the Taunus Mountains and the Black Forest. This work included the construction of a road from Argentorate on the western side of the Rhine through the Black Forest to Raetia (*CIL* 13.9082), and was evidently aimed at facilitating more efficient communication and movement between the armies of the Rhine and Danube.

Expansion in the region progressed slowly and continued into the reign of Domitian (see, Schönberger 1969, 156–7). In 82/83 Domitian waged a successful campaign against the Chatti (Jones 1973; Jones 1992, 128–31). This campaign included the extension of the *limites* along a line of 120 miles of forest (Frontin. *Str.* 1.3.10). Since

the *Agri Decumates* lacked natural defenses, a line of fortifications were constructed: the bulk of this work was done under Domitian, though completion fell to his successors. According to Frontinus, the primary purpose of this action was to deny the enemy use of the forest as cover in the future. These actions were likely linked with building work along the northern bank of the Danube and consolidated by Domitian's campaigns north of the Danube in the late 80s and early 90s. In 89 the commander in Upper Germany, L. Antonius Saturninus secured the support of a number of German tribes and revolted (Suet. *Dom.* 6.2; Cass. Dio 67.11). Following the suppression of the revolt by loyal commanders in Lower Germany and Rhaetia, the offending legions *XIV Gemina* and *XXI Rapax* were moved from Moguntiacum to Pannonia, *XIV Gemina* possibly to the site of Mursa. Another likely outcome was the establishment of Upper Germany as a province, probably sometime before 27 October 90 (*ILS* 1998; cf. *ILS* 1015). It was thus Domitian who converted Upper Germany (*Germania Superior*) and Lower Germany (*Germania Inferior*) into regular provinces (see further CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, section 3).

4.2 Danube

The Danube was essentially divided into two parts by the gorge known as the “Iron Gates.” The river was widely known by two names: *Ister* for the lower Danube and *Danuvius* for the upper river. Fleets had first been deployed by the Romans on the Danube during Augustus' campaigns in the region. By the Flavian era there was a fleet based on the upper Danube in Pannonia. A second fleet was stationed on the lower Danube in Moesia.

The Danubian provinces became the site of a major conflict with Dacia in the later years of Domitian's reign, a conflict that would in turn lead to Trajan's bloody wars of conquest in Dacia a decade later. But significant increases in the forces deployed to the Danubian provinces were already made by Vespasian in the 70s, in reaction to troubling developments in the late 60s. The movement of two Sarmatian peoples, the Iazyges and Roxolani, into Dacia had led to increased hostilities in the last years of Nero's reign (*ILS* 986). Moreover, the weakening of the Roman military presence on the Danube during the civil war had prompted a number of incursions by the Dacians and Sarmatians living north of the river.

Under Nero, *VII Claudia Pia Fidelis* and *VIII Augusta* had been stationed in Moesia. In 68, the experienced *III Gallica* had been brought from Syria, raising the number to three. In the winter of 68–69 the Moesian legions had been depleted to assist Otho in his conflict with Vitellius (Suet. *Vesp.* 6.2). This prompted aggressive action by the Roxolani who were subdued by the under-strength *III Gallica* operating in advantageous circumstances (Tac. *Hist.* 1.79). The subsequent removal of the Moesian legions by Antonius Primus and the fighting in Italy emboldened the Dacians to cross the lower Danube, occupying both banks (Tac. *Hist.* 3.5). This incursion was repelled by C. Licinius Mucianus, himself en route to Italy, who left C. Fonteius Agrippa in command of Moesia (Tac. *Hist.* 3.46). In the following year, however, Fonteius was killed during an incursion by the Sarmatians, prompting another campaign to restore order in the province. Rubrius Gallus was sent to reassert Roman control

over Moesia and according to Josephus, increased the number of fortifications and troops stationed along the Danube in response (Joseph. *BJ* 7.89). It is probably at this time that the Moesian and Pannonian fleets received the honorific title *Flavia*, in recognition of their efforts in defending the Danubian province during the civil war (Starr 1960, 132).

Under the Flavians there was an increasing shift of military resources to the Danubian provinces. South of Moesia, Thrace had been reorganized as a province in 46 CE under the command of a procurator and this arrangement was continued throughout the Flavian era. In Dalmatia, the one legion stationed in the province was removed under the Flavians. In 71, *III Gallica* was sent back to Syria and *VIII Augusta* was sent to Upper Germany. Vespasian replaced these with four legions, *I Italica*, *IV Flavia Firma*, *V Alaudae*, and *V Macedonica*. During the Jewish War, Vespasian had commanded three legions in Judea. From 71 only *X Fretensis* was needed to maintain order in Judea, allowing *legio V Macedonica* to be stationed in Moesia and *legio XV Apollinaris* to be sent to Pannonia.

Again the deployment of legions of proven loyalty was probably intended to bolster the stability of the Roman presence along the river, an indication of the rising importance of the Danubian provinces for the protection of the empire, particularly in view of their proximity to Italy. Reliable legions were needed in the region; the part that the Pannonian and Moesian legions had played in the civil war (on more than one contender's side) suggested that they could pose a threat to any regime; this was later demonstrated by the rise of Septimius Severus in 193.

The Danube was the scene of a number of serious conflicts in the late 80s and early 90s. In the early 80s additional auxiliaries had been transferred to Pannonia (Jones 1992, 137–8). In 85, the governor of Moesia, Oppius Sabinus, was killed while attempting to repel a Dacian invasion. In 86, there was a second disaster when the praetorian prefect Cornelius Fuscus was defeated in Dacia: he was slain, and the *legio V Alaudae* annihilated (Suet. *Dom.* 6; Cass. Dio 67.6.5–6, 68.9.3). It was not until after the Roman victory at Tapae in 88 that a peace settlement could be made (Jones 1992, 141–2). The events of 85–88 demonstrated the necessity of safeguarding against the threat posed by Dacia. In addition to increasing the number of legions in the region, Domitian in 86 divided Moesia into two provinces, *Moesia Superior* (in the west) and *Moesia Inferior* (in the east), both placed under the command of a consular legate.

In the wake of 85–88, additional legions were also transferred to parts of the Danubian frontier. The one remaining legion in Dalmatia, *IV Flavia Felix* was taken from its base at Burnum and stationed in *Moesia Superior*. Sometime thereafter, *II Adiutrix* was taken from Britain and established in a new permanent camp at Aquincum in Pannonia near a major crossing point of the Danube. *I Adiutrix* was also removed from the Rhine and based near Sirmum in *Moesia Superior*.

In 89 and again in 92, Domitian was faced with incursions into Pannonia on the upper Danube. In 89, he repulsed the Marcomani and Quadi (Cass. Dio 67.7–8). Three years later he was again needed in the region after the annihilation of one of the Pannonian legions during an invasion of the Sarmatians and Suebi. This legion was possibly *XXI Rapax*, which had been taken from its base at Moguntiacum on the Rhine. In the late 90s, Vindabona was also strengthened by the relocation of *XIII Gemina* to the site.

4.3 *Eastern provinces*

Flavian policy along the Rhine and Danube frontier regions largely followed a pattern established by the Julio-Claudians: rebuilding or building additional forts and roads, improving existing networks and bolstering the military presence in response to particular threats. In the East, by contrast, the Flavians initiated an ambitious new program, dramatically reorganizing the state of the eastern provinces and making a substantial investment in new roads and forts. The character of Flavian work here was also quite different from the regions along the rivers Rhine and Danube. In the more urbanized East, legions were typically garrisoned in or near existing cities (Isaac 1990). Vespasian made significant redeployments of the legions in the eastern provinces. Typically new fortresses were constructed near road junctions on level ground and were of comparable size and shape to fortresses in the West (Parker 2000, 121–5). The importance of this work, and possibly the diplomatically delicate nature of it, is indicated by the small group of trusted associates entrusted with its oversight.

These changes began almost immediately after Vespasian came to power and may have been prompted by various factors. First, Vespasian's familiarity with the East, and in particular the Levant, must have made him keenly aware of the state of its military organization. As Bowersock (1973, 133) notes, Vespasian's experience in Palestine and in neighboring regions of the East formed the basis "for an informed policy in respect to the provinces of the area." Second, the absorption of former semi-independent kingdoms under Nero had necessitated the reorganization of the eastern provinces and a more direct Roman military presence in the East. With it came the need for new roads and fortresses to be constructed. Also motivating these developments were the difficult relationships with the kingdom of Greater Armenia and Parthia: projecting Roman strength was an ongoing strategic concern. Vespasian had remained in the East in 69, sending Mucianus ahead to deal with the situation in Italy. Titus likewise remained in the East to oversee the final stages of the Jewish war. This was in marked contrast to Vitellius in Germany, or even Antonius Primus in Illyricum, whose actions had put the Rhine and Danubian frontiers at risk: the Flavians were cautious not to destabilize the eastern provinces nor appear weak in the eyes of the Parthians.

The client kingdom of Cappadocia had been annexed under Tiberius in 17 CE. Under Nero, Cappadocia had been attached to Galatia (Tac. *Ann.* 15.6). Vespasian restored this arrangement with the enlarged region under the command of a consular legate (Suet. *Vesp.* 8). Between 70/71 and 72/73 M. Ulpius Traianus was in command of the new province. The father of the future emperor, Traianus was entrusted with a sequence of important provincial commands. Under the Flavians a network of roads and forts were constructed in the province, with the cities of Melitene and Satala being established as legionary bases. *XII Fulminata* was based at the city of Metilene from sometime after 70 (Joseph. *BJ* 7.18), leaving its former base at Raphanaea in Syria. In 75 or 76 *XVI Flavia Firma* was stationed at Satala. A legionary fortress was built at the site; extant remains indicate that it was approximately 16.5 hectares with the remains of a heavily fortified wall and towers preserved (Parker 2000, 121–3).

In 54 CE, the Parthian king Vologaeses I installed his brother Tiridates on the Armenian throne. Following Roman campaigns against the kingdom, Cn. Domitius Corbulo (*suff.* 39) negotiated an agreement by which Tiridates would be crowned by Nero in

Rome in 66. In the period since Augustus, there had been a succession of rulers of Lesser Armenia. Vespasian annexed Lesser Armenia in 71/2 incorporating it into the province of Cappadocia/Galatia. This was followed by a swift campaign against King Antiochus to conquer Commagene in 72/73 and the stationing of a legion at the former capital, Samosata (Joseph. *BJ* 7.219–29). These moves had the effect of extending direct Roman control to the upper Euphrates. The decision to control Samosata was likely due to its strategically important position in relation to the Parthians (Joseph. *BJ* 7.224–31; see Millar 1993 and Whittaker 1994). In the early 80s, A. Caesennius Gallus is attested as overseeing construction of further military roads in Pontus, Cappadocia, and Lesser Armenia. These were begun under Titus and continued under Domitian (*ILS* 263; 268) and represent a continuation of the general program of infrastructure building initiated under Vespasian (Mitford 1974, 172–3).

Syria saw a sequence of trusted governors, including L. Caesennius Paetus until 73 and A. Marius Celsus (a former legate of Domitus Corbulo). M. Ulpius Traianus was legate of Syria between 73/74 and 77/78 and appears to have been assigned the important task of reorganizing the province and overseeing the establishment of new military infrastructure throughout the region (Bowersock 1973, 133–5). Milestones indicate the construction of a network of strategically important roads under Vespasian. A milestone erected in 75 at Arak attests to the construction of a road between Palmyra and the city of Sura on the Euphrates (Bowersock 1973; Isaac 1990).

The underlying reasons for this construction activity have been a source of debate for modern scholars. Bowersock has argued that construction of fortifications in Palmyra should also be linked to this period and that urban development in the cities of Gerasa and Bostra (seemingly encouraged by Roman governors) should also be dated to the Flavian period. Proximity to Syria and control of important overland trade routes were certainly important factors (Bowersock 1973, 137–40). Under the emperor Trajan, with the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom into the empire as the province of Arabia, the city of Bostra was made the capital, as well as the site of a legionary fortress (Parker 2000, 124). Isaac (1990) has argued that construction activity in the 70s in Syria may have been of an aggressive nature: securing the regions around Armenia made potential operations against the kingdom and the Parthians more feasible. While acknowledging Isaac's argument, Levick (1999, 167–9) suggests additional factors, such as the role the Euphrates might have played as a line of demarcation and a defensive position against peoples beyond Armenia and Parthia, such as the Alani, who invaded Armenia in 72/73 (Joseph. *BJ* 7.244).

The independent dynasty at Emesa probably ended in the mid-70s, and the city was added to the province of Syria by 78 (Bowersock 1973, 140). The motivation was likely the city's position at a gap in the mountains used by the road connecting Palmyra to the sea. Similar concerns are in evidence along the Euphrates: following the annexation of Commagene in 73, one legion was based at the city of Samosata, where it protected a major crossing of the river. At the city of Zeugma a legion had already been stationed under the Julio-Claudians. This was replaced with *IV Scythica*. Improved infrastructure in the East could serve a number of purposes at once. Stationing legions closer to the Euphrates facilitated communication and the movement of soldiers, which, as on the Rhine and Danube, could act as a deterrent as well as facilitate offensive operations. Flavian efforts to enhance the military infrastructure in the East cannot have gone

unnoticed by the Parthians, and legions stationed with access to the Euphrates must have been a factor in Roman-Parthian negotiations. The usefulness of the river as a line of demarcation was probably limited, but it should also be remembered that the river was a crucial means of transport for any Roman army advancing into Parthia (notable examples are Trajan in 115, Severus in 197, and Julian in 363).

4.4 *North Africa*

In North Africa, as in the East, the Flavian era witnessed a gradual projection of Roman military control in many areas. Levick (1999, 157) aptly describes the period in general as one of “advancing and deepening control” by the Romans. Geographical knowledge was also advanced: under the Flavians expeditions were conducted to both Ethiopia and the land of the Garamantes (Ptolemy, 1.8.4; Levick 1999, 156; Jones 1992, 139). These revealed that the continent extended south much further than had generally been assumed (Mattern 1999, 64–5). The noteworthy exception to this dynamic picture is Egypt, which saw little change; the legions *III Cyrenaica* and *XXII Deiotariana* were stationed in this important province, as they had been under Nero.

The province of Africa Proconsularis had been under the command of a proconsul since the time of Augustus. The legion *III Augusta*, which from the reign of Gaius had been under the command of a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, had been stationed at Ammaedara in Numidia. In 70, the legate of *III Augusta*, C. Valerius Festus, defeated the Garamantes and opened up permanent Roman access to their territory (Plin. *NH* 5.5; Levick 1999). The boundaries of the province of Africa were also resurveyed under Vespasian and it was divided into two administrative regions; *vetera* and *nova*, separated by the *fossa regia* or “Royal Ditch.” This division was likely carried out for its financial benefits rather than for particular military reasons (Elton 1996, 19; Levick 1999, 100).

It was probably in the mid-70s, under Vespasian, that *III Augusta* was moved south from Ammaedara to Theveste, with a fort for detachments constructed in the 80s at Lambaesis in the west of Numidia (Jones 1992, 140). The establishment of Ammaedara, Cilium and Sufetula as colonies may also date to Vespasian’s reign and was likely associated with these redeployments (Levick 1999, 157). Milestones indicate Flavian road-building activity, in particular linking Theveste to the coastal cities of Hippo Regius and Carthage. In 86 or thereabouts, there was a substantial uprising over Roman taxation in Africa Proconsularis. Of the peoples involved, only the Nasamones, dwelling to the southeast of Leptis, are named by Cassius Dio. Having massacred the tax collectors they defeated Cn. Suellius Flaccus, the commander in Numidia, and plundered his camp. In a counter-attack Flaccus slaughtered the rebellious peoples, Domitian reportedly boasting he had “forbidden the Nasamones from existing” (Cass. Dio 67.4.6–7; Jones 1992, 139–40).

4.5 *Britain*

Continuing into the mid-80s the Flavians engaged in a considerable expansion of the territory under control in Britain, sending able commanders to the island. *II Adiutrix*, probably formed by Nero from the Italian fleets (Tac. *Hist.* 3.12), assisted in the

suppression of Julius Civilis and then accompanied Q. Petillius Cerialis to Britain in 71. Between 71 and 73/74 Cerialis moved northward against the Brigantes, stationing *II Adiutrix* at Lindum (modern Lincoln) and *IX Hispana* further north at Eburacum (modern York). Cerialis' successor, Julius Frontinus then extended westward into what is now Wales. He established *II Augusta* at Isca (the modern town of Caerleon) and possibly *II Adiutrix* at Deva (modern Chester), later replaced by *XX Valeria Victrix*. Frontinus also established a network of forts as well as earth and wooden ramparts at sites such as Brecon and Caesws (Levick 1999, 158).

Between 77 and 84, Cn. Julius Agricola effectively completed the subjugation of Wales and pushed further north into the region of modern Scotland, subduing the Ordovices and Brigantes. Domitian's decision, upon accession in 81, to leave Agricola in office suggests aggressive intent, or possibly, a desire for military successes early in his reign. Under Agricola's governorship forts were established along the Forth and Clyde line (Shotter 1996, 41–2). This was probably intended to function as a line from which ongoing inroads could be made by the army further north. Agricola certainly had designs upon the total conquest of the island (Salmon 1968, 246; Shotter 1996, 40–1; Levick 1999, 158–9). In late 83, Agricola won a decisive battle at *Mons Graupius*.

The end of Agricola's long command on the island and his recall were seen by Tacitus as the actions of a spiteful emperor (*Agr.* 40–1), but should rather be seen as indicative of prudence and, perhaps, a strategic recognition on Domitian's part of the relative unimportance of the new conquests (see CHAPTER 14, FLAVIAN BRITAIN, section 6). Around 86/87, *II Adiutrix* was removed from Britain, a decision marking a move away from an expansionist policy on the island (Shotter 1996, 41). Salmon suggests that the total conquest of the island (and the prospect of conquering Ireland) would have “over-taxed the military resources of the Empire” making it unfeasible (Salmon 1968, 246). Be that as it may, the redeployment reflects a strategic shift of focus to the Danubian frontier, necessitated by the conflict with the Dacians, Sarmatians, and other peoples living in the lands north of the river. Reduction of the military presence in Britain spelled the end of aspirations for total conquest of the island. The demolished fortress at Inchtuthil and other abandoned sites should be connected with the removal of soldiers in the mid-80s (Jones 1992, 134; Levick 1999, 159–60). By the beginning of Trajan's reign the line from Tyne to Solway had become an established frontier.

5 Seas and rivers

The role played by naval resources is often overlooked in Roman military studies. This is due in part to the scant attention afforded this branch of the military in ancient literary sources, which manifest far greater interest in terrestrial activity. The fleets were, nonetheless, an important element of both aggressive and defensive military operations. On the Rhine and Danube rivers, the fleets provided lateral lines of communication and facilitated the movement of forces and goods. As with the military organization of frontier regions, the Flavians inherited a naval system that dated to the reign of Augustus and had evolved under the Julio-Claudians.

By the death of Augustus there were two major fleets with naval bases located on the Italian peninsula: on the Tyrrhenian Sea at Misenum and on the Adriatic at Ravenna.

The function of these forces was not exclusively to provide logistical support for the army. While the transport of legions and equipment by seas and rivers was sometimes necessary, armies generally moved by land in the first century CE. Given the enormous investment of manpower and the immense cost of maintaining a standing naval force, a role in defending Italy (Tac. *Ann.* 4.5) and more broadly ensuring the security of shipping in the Mediterranean must be assumed. The importance of the fleets is demonstrated by continued expansion under the Julio-Claudians, with a substantial presence on the Rhine, fleets on the upper and lower Danube, and a fleet established in the Black Sea under Nero.

The fleets played an important role in ensuring the security and defense of the empire under the Flavians. Their growing significance is suggested by the role they played in the civil wars and further expansion. Between 68 and 70 the fleets of the Danube had been heavily relied upon to defend the Illyrian provinces – for which service, it would appear, Vespasian awarded them the title *Flavia*. The *Classis Germanica*, based at Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippensium on the Rhine (modern Cologne), was similarly extended the title of *pia fidelis Domitiana* denoting their loyal service to him during the suppression of the revolt of Saturninus in 89. In Britain, a fleet had been used in support of ongoing campaigning and under Agricola's command reached as far as northern Scotland (Tac. *Agr.* 10, 18, 29 and 38).

It was probably under Vespasian that the city of Seleucia Pieria, situated west of Antioch on the estuary of the Orontes, became the base of an imperial fleet. In 75, a tunnel and canal were constructed near the city in order to keep the harbor clear (AE 1983, 927). This is a likely indication that Vespasian established a naval base at the site for the *Classis Syriaca*. The *Classis Syriaca* is attested on a diploma of discharge issued in 119. Assuming the recipient of the diploma had served the normal 26 years, he would have been enlisted under Domitian in 93 (Eck, Macdonald, and Pangerl 2002, 427). The construction work at Seleucia Pieria can thus be linked with the general program of infrastructure development throughout the East, and it is probably significant that the new harbor assisted in accessing Zeugma and Apameia where a bridge provided a crossing of the Euphrates (Isaac 1990, 35), a journey, according to Pliny of about 175 Roman miles (Plin. *NH* 5.13).

Conclusion

There is little indication that the Flavians ever embarked upon a deliberate project of a more “defensive” empire or the consistent creation of defined physical boundaries for it. Such a vision would have been as much a radical departure from existing military practices as it would have been at odds with Roman concepts of glory, personal prestige, and revenge (Mattern 1999). Instead, the Flavian era is characterized by what appears to have been the prudent redeployment of military resources and the improvement of infrastructure. These efforts were tailored to particular conditions in the different regions, but also involved global considerations in the deployment of the empire's finite military resources, particularly in terms of manpower (Kagan 2006). In the context of longer-term development of Roman frontier regions, the substantial frontier projects undertaken in the second century might be seen to have an antecedent in the work of

the Flavians. In turn, many of the Flavian military policies have recognizable antecedents from the Julio-Claudian era. The Flavians' most trusted military men, including M. Ulpius Traianus and Q. Petillius Cerialis, had served in the provinces under Claudius and Nero, as had Vespasian himself. They were not simply familiar with existing military practices and frontier systems: they were among the chief implementers of these policies prior to 69.

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FURTHER READING

Chapter 10 of Levick's (1999) monograph on Vespasian provides an excellent survey of military policy under that emperor, while discussing many of the interpretative difficulties inherent in analyzing frontier policy in the Flavian era. For the reign of Domitian, the pertinent chapters of Jones (1992) are particularly helpful. Works on the history of the Roman frontiers generally devote considerable discussion to the Flavian period. For the longstanding debate on how to interpret the Roman frontiers see Luttwak (1976), Millar (1982), Isaac (1988 and 1990), Whittaker (1994 and 2004), Mattern (1999). For an up-to-date critique of the application of the notion of grand strategy to the Roman world see Kagan (2006).

CHAPTER 12

Centers and Peripheries

Randall Pogorzelski

Introduction

Tacitus argues that the death of Nero and the beginning of the Flavian period exposed a secret of imperial power, namely, that the emperor could be made outside of Rome (*evulgato imperii arcano posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri*, *Hist.* 1.4). The revelation of this secret may not indicate a shift in reality or in policy, but it does signal a shift in the Roman perception of the relationships between the center and the periphery of the empire. At the very least, it is an implicit acknowledgment that there are now two centers to the empire: the city of Rome and the person of the emperor. It is my contention that, while there may be little difference between the reality of the Augustan and Flavian geographical policies, the Flavian period is marked by a shift in the perception of the relationship between the centers and peripheries of the empire. Nicolet (1991) has argued that the Augustan remaking of Rome involved a profound change in the way Romans imagined their spatial and geographical identities. I will argue that another change in the perception of Rome's place in the larger world characterizes the Flavian remaking of the principate. In particular, the literature of Flavian Rome emphasizes confusion between the roles of the center and those of the periphery. In contrast to the old arguments for Flavian centralization and "scientific frontiers," I will argue that Flavian culture decentralizes Rome and in fact problematizes the very concept of the center.

1 Theoretical and historical background

The concept of the imperial center/periphery relationship is rooted in geography. It depends on a conception of relative location in space that is neither natural nor permanent but rather historically and culturally contingent. The history of geography is a field that has drawn considerable attention both in general and among classical scholars and ancient historians.

Pickles (2004) has well discussed the subjective and historically contingent quality of geography, which, as Pomeroy (2003, 361) has reminded us in a reading of Tacitus' *Histories*, "often turns out to be a state of mind rather than a collection of empirically verifiable facts." The way we imagine the space of the world and our place in it has a profound effect on our identity. In the modern world, geographical identity is caught up in nationalism, and maps frequently display with lines and colors a sort of territorial shorthand for a whole set of characteristics and ideas. There were no such nationalist political maps with neat boundary lines drawn on them in ancient Mediterranean cartography. In fact cartography itself was far less important a part of geographical identity in the ancient world than it is for us today. But although geography has different characteristics at different times and in different places, ancient Roman geography was no less caught up in issues of culture and identity than modern geography is.

The entanglement of geography and cultural identity means that the Flavian problematization of center and periphery is not limited to the geographical center and periphery of the empire. Geography is not a disinterested and purely scientific endeavor, but an ideological image of space that participates in cultural constructions of identity. The idea of a center is not just a particular location defined in relation to other locations, but also a network of cultural power relations. One might, for example, define the center and periphery economically. The economic center exploits the resources and labor of the periphery, drawing in and redistributing wealth (Rowlands 1987, 4–8). Similarly, military and political power can define a center through hierarchical command structures. The center is the general or emperor acting as a source of commands rather than a location in space. There is also a cultural and moral aspect to the center, as language, dress, and other social customs become involved in the geographical, military, political, and economic dynamics of center and periphery, or rather, as should now be clear, centers and peripheries.

A more modern example may help to illustrate the significance of the idea of centers and peripheries. The heliocentric model of the solar system may have simplified the mathematics representing the movements of the planets, but it also revealed the deep importance of centrism in general. In the heliocentric/geocentric debate, the definitions of the center and periphery are not purely spatial, but also dynamic. The center is the stable and unchanging point in relation to which the astronomer defines the motion of the peripheries. Moreover, the center is the unitary point of reference for multiple and various other bodies. Applied to the Roman empire, it is easy to see how center and periphery are not purely geographical, but fit into a series of binary oppositions underpinning Roman ideology. The unity and stability of the center opposed to the multiplicity and instability of the peripheries has analogues in such key aspects of ideology as gender and Orientalism. To the extent that Flavian culture challenges Augustan centrism, it represents a deep shift in Roman identity.

Even purely geographically, the Flavian period saw a multiplication of centers and peripheries. Tacitus' *Histories* demonstrates the reproduction and diffusion of centers and peripheries in more ways than just the split between the geographical center of the empire in the city of Rome and the military and political center in the person of the emperor. One of the most fundamental binary oppositions in Roman ideology was a spatial or geographical opposition between life *domi* (at home) and *belli* or *militiae* (on campaign). The identification of being "at home" with the city of Rome was, by the

Flavian period, inadequate to the structure of the empire. It was no longer even notionally the case that Rome was distinguished from all other cities as the place where Romans were at home and not at war. Rather, Rome became the focus of a campaign as much as other military centers. Even something as fundamental for Tacitus as the narrative structure of annalistic historiography is threatened by centripetal civil wars, as annalistic history typically begins with the city and moves on to the year's campaigns. The civil wars of 68–69, which reversed the military direction from moving outwards from Rome to moving inwards toward Rome, threatened the annalistic structure of Roman historiography as much as Rome itself (Pomeroy 2003, 364).

The absence of the emperor from Rome is not just a separation of the military and political center from the geographical one, but also an acknowledgment of the possibility of other geographical centers. Vespasian's policies of urbanization in the West and annexation in the East imagined the empire as a web of interconnected urban centers rather than a wheel around a Roman hub (Shaw 2000, 373–4). Rome had always used the local elites of provincial cities as centers, and so Vespasian's policy was not radically new, but rather a stage in a long and sometimes discontinuous process. In fact, from a certain perspective the Augustan insistence on the absolute centrality of Rome and Italy may never have fit very well with an alternate Roman vision of a world made up of a web of urban centers connected by roads and ports. Vespasian's extended stay in Alexandria suggested in a way unheard of since Augustus' defeat of Antony and Cleopatra not only that the emperor was made outside of Rome, but also that he could rule the empire more effectively from another city. His administrative policies may appear to centralize authority, but they do so through multiple centers, challenging the unity of the center and prefiguring a time when the city of Rome would lose its preeminence in favor of a variety of other geographical centers.

Not so long ago, it was clear to historians that the key developments of the Flavian Age included the centralization of bureaucratic authority (Charlesworth 1965, 16, 33–45; Luttwak 1976, 112), the Romanization of the provinces (Charlesworth 1965, 14, 43), and the beginning of fixed frontiers of the empire (Syme 1965 135, 183; Luttwak 1976, 61–117). None of these developments was revolutionary, but each rather continued and extended the Augustan program in a time of consolidation and organization. More recently, however, scholars have begun to challenge this view of the center and periphery in the Flavian Age. The most powerful critiques have concerned the periphery, as the ideas of Romanization and the emergence of scientific frontiers have met with persuasive challenges. Whittaker (1994), for example, has argued that although the empire may have ceased to expand in the same great leaps and bounds as it had in the Republican period, this was because of a combination of environmental and economic factors rather than a conscious and strategic decision on the part of Roman commanders and emperors. Ando (2000) and Barclay (2005) have argued that in place of a homogenizing Romanization there were rather heterogeneous provincial strategies for negotiating identity under Roman rule.

Implicit in such arguments rethinking the character of the Flavian peripheries is a rethinking of the character of the center that defines itself against the periphery. For example, although efforts to make tax assessment and collection more efficient may have worked towards centralizing the authority of the imperial administration (Levick 1999, 98–106), in the military sphere the growing conviction that the slowing of expansion was

not part of a consciously controlled central strategy suggests that the notion of bureaucratic centralization of authority is less firmly held than it once was (Whittaker 1994, 60–97). Moreover, elements of Flavian policy that promoted centralization might just as easily be taken as encouraging a diffusion of authority. Vespasian's encouragement of Spanish urbanization and grant of the Latin right to all of Hispania (Alföldy 2000, 450–2; see also CHAPTER 1, SOURCES AND EVIDENCE, section 2), for example, not only tied the local elites to him personally and gave him a new recruiting ground for supporters, but it was also part of an increasing diffusion of citizenship throughout the empire (Shaw 2000, 362–73). The Flavian annexation of client states in the East similarly brought them under more direct control, but also allowed them to exert more influence on the center. Measures that tied the provincial elite to the emperor directly may have centralized the provincial administration, but they also laid the groundwork for a time when, as Nicolet (1991, 204) has put it, “Italy would be a mere province among others.”

Concomitant with military and political developments of the late Republic and early Empire that changed the economic, military, and political relationships between the center and the periphery were cultural developments that changed perceptions of the center and the periphery. For example, in the late Republic as Pompey and Caesar conquered large amounts of peripheral territory for Rome, they also intensified the rhetoric and iconography of world conquest (Nicolet 1991, 29–47). Simultaneously with the rhetorical stretching of the limits of the empire to the edges of the world, authors such as Varro and Vitruvius began to emphasize the naturally geographical centrality of Italy, imagining a world in which power radiated from an Italian center to the ends of the earth (Whittaker 1994, 38). The Italian climate especially, partway between the cold north and the hot south, was powerful evidence of Italy's natural position. Influenced as we are by the late Republican and Augustan evidence, it is difficult to imagine how Romans could have seen the world any other way, but the concept of Italian centrality, and especially the idea of natural and permanent centrality that links climatic advantage with military and political dominance was an invention of a people coming to terms with massive exploration and conquest.

The ideology of geographical identity that developed in the early Roman Empire was subject to constant revision and adaptation to new historical circumstances. In the Flavian period just as in the Augustan period, cultural representations accompanied and influenced the shifting relationships between the centers and the peripheries of the empire. Flavian geographical ideology was particularly caught up in issues of center and periphery, and each in their own way, Flavian authors including Silius Italicus, Martial, Statius, Juvenal, Pliny the Elder, Josephus, and Tacitus all work through problems of centers and peripheries, inverting and complicating not only the geographical aspects of center and periphery, but also economic, military, and cultural centers and peripheries.

2 Geographical centers and peripheries: Silius Italicus' *Punica*

One of the most straightforward inversions of center and periphery is in Silius' representation of Hannibal crossing the Alps. The focalization of the narrative through Hannibal and the Carthaginian soldiers invites a worldview that moves Rome and Italy away from

the center. The narrative repeatedly emphasizes the Second Punic War as a historical moment that would determine whether Carthage or Rome would become the capital of the world. The choice takes on geographical significance when Hannibal's troops as they march into Italy object that they are going beyond the edge of the world:

At miles dubio tardat vestigia gressu,
impia ceu sacros in finis arma per orbem,
Natura prohibente, ferant divisque repugnant.
Sil. *Pun.* 3.500–2

The soldiers slow their steps with a hesitant gait, as though, with Nature forbidding it, they are carrying impious arms over the world across sacred borders and offending the gods.

In the Roman world, Italy is the center, both geographically and culturally. For the Carthaginians, however, the march into Italy is a march into the periphery. It might be possible to read this passage as a statement of the territorial integrity of Italy south of the Alps (an anachronistic geography for the Second Punic War but a characteristically Augustan one), and that the Carthaginian troops, rather than seeing the Alps as the edge of the earth are respecting the sacred right of Rome to control the peninsula. The passage is reminiscent, however, of others in which Romans themselves are forbidden by the gods from passing beyond the edges of the earth. Albinovanus Pedo, for example, writes similarly about Germanicus' sea voyage:

anne alio positas ultra sub cardine gentes
atque alium bellis intactum quaerimus orbem?
di revocant rerumque vetant cognoscere finem
mortales oculos. aliena quid aequora remis
et sacras violamus aquas divumque quietas
turbamus sedes?

Sen. *Suas.* 1.15, quoting Pedo

Do we seek races placed beyond, beneath another pole and another world untouched by wars? The gods call us back and forbid mortal eyes to know the limit of things. Why do we violate with oars an alien sea and sacred waters, and disturb the peaceful home of the gods?

Germanicus, like Silius' Carthaginians, is carrying arms over sacred borders forbidden by the gods. The trope is common and can be found similarly in Horace (*Od.* 1.3.21–6), Seneca (*Med.* 364–80), and Pliny the Elder (*NH* 19.1.5). Hannibal's troops marching over the cold mountains are more reminiscent of Pedo's Germanicus than, for example, Lucan's Caesar crossing the Rubicon. The forbidding barrier of the Alps strengthens the image of marching off the edge of the world, but it is difficult to imagine a Roman soldier thinking of the Alps as the edge of the Earth. The representation of Italy as the distant periphery from the Carthaginian perspective suggests that the central quality of Italy is not natural, as Varro and Vitruvius would have it, but rather historically and culturally contingent on the Roman victory over Hannibal.

Silius accompanies his representation of Italy as peripheral in the past with a representation of the present peripheries of the empire. Although his subject is the Second Punic

War, he is a product of the Flavian Age and includes the Flavian emperors in the *Punica*. He does not, however, represent the emperors at Rome, but in the provinces. Vespasian is shown in Thule (3.587), Caledonia (598), Africa (599), on the Rhine (599), and in Judea (600); and Domitian in Germany (607), on the Ganges (612), in Bactria (613), on the Danube (617), in the far north (614), and the far east (615) (Wilson 1993, 234). The Flavian emperors, themselves the center of Rome, are for Silius located on the periphery of the empire rather than in Italy or the city of Rome. If the center of the empire resides in the person of the emperor rather than in the capital city, then Silius places the center on the periphery as much as his Carthaginian troops placed the periphery in the center.

The contingency and subjectivity of Silius' centers and peripheries appears again when Bostar returns from the oracle of Ammon to report to Hannibal. Describing the terrain around the oracle, Bostar explains:

ad finem caeli medio tenduntur ab orbe
squalentes campi.

Sil. *Pun.* 3.654–5

Empty fields stretch from the center of the earth to the edge of the sky.

Bostar is standing in a particular location looking at the horizon, and he describes that location as the center of the world (*medio ... orbe*). His description is perfectly reasonable, but it describes as *medio orbe* wherever he happens to be standing. For Bostar, the center of the world is radically subjective. It moves with the person and is presumably different for every person at any moment. This is a far cry from Varro and Vitruvius on the natural, permanent, and objective Italian center of the world. Silius thus destabilizes the center and periphery of the Roman empire in three ways. First, he shows Hannibal's troops imagining Italy as the edge of the Earth, second he represents the Flavian emperors exclusively on the peripheries of the empire, and third he radicalizes the subjectivity of the center through Bostar's description of the terrain around the oracle of Ammon. The combination of these three features suggests a significant instability in the relationship between center and periphery and indeed in the very concept of the center.

3 Poetic centers and peripheries: Martial's *Epigrams*

Like Silius, Martial is concerned with the separation of the emperor from the imperial center of Rome. In particular, in a series of four consecutive epigrams early in the seventh book, Martial laments the absence of Domitian from Rome on campaign (7.5–8). It is natural for Martial that the political center of Rome, that is the emperor, should be in the geographical center of the empire in the city of Rome. What is especially striking about the way Martial represents the absence of the emperor from Rome is that he does so by inverting the tropes of Ovid's exile poetry (Pitcher 1998, 65–72). For Ovid, it is the poet who, thanks at least in part to his poetry, is on the periphery of the world, longing for a return to the center. For Martial, it is the poet who remains in the center, longing for the emperor to return and reestablish the connection between poet and patron. Martial had set up the comparison in 3.4, when he was temporarily absent from Rome in northern Italy. Here he addresses his book as he sends it to Rome: *Romam vade, liber*

(Go to Rome, book, 3.4.1). Pitcher (1998, 60) suggests that this is reminiscent of Ovid's address to his own writing at *Tristia* 3.7, *Vade salutatum ... Perillam, littera* (Go to greet Perilla, letter, 3.7.1–2) and 1.1, *Parve ... liber, ibis in urbem ... vade, sed incultus* (Little book, you will go into the city ... go, but uncultivated, 1.1.1–2) and further that the dialogue between book and author in *Epigram* 3.4 echoes the dialogue in *Tristia* 3.1 between the book and its guide to the emperor's palace in the imperial center. Although Martial's absence from Rome is voluntary and he is hardly on the periphery of the world as Ovid was, the parallel he sets up in Book 3 allows the poet to invert the poetic relationship of center and periphery in Book 7, when it is now the poet who is in the center and the emperor who is on the periphery. For Martial, the poet and emperor belong together in the imperial center, but the separation of poet and prince in the Flavian period is an inversion of the Augustan separation that keeps the emperor at Rome and sends the poet to the edges of the world.

The Romanocentrism of Martial's poetic geography echoes late Republican and Augustan geographical Romanocentrism, but Martial points out that when the proper order of center and periphery is disturbed in the Flavian period, that disturbance is the inverse of the Augustan one. Martial's inversion of the geography of Ovidian exile recurs briefly in *Epigram* 8.3, when he comments on the dissemination of his poetry throughout the empire. In book eight, the poet is again in the city, and visitors from all over the world will carry his poetry with them as they go: *secum plurimus hospes | ad patrias sedes carmina nostra feret* (Many a visitor will carry my poems with him to his homeland, *Ep.* 8.3.7–8, cited in Pitcher 1998, 64). In contrast to Ovid finding a way for his poems to make it from the periphery to Rome, here Martial's poems make the proper journey outward from the center. Even in such a Romanocentric poet as Martial, we find that the Flavian period disturbs the proper relationship of the poetic center and periphery.

4 Cultural centers and peripheries: Statius' *Silvae*

Silius and Martial are not the only Flavian poets to problematize the nature and the roles of center and periphery. Statius' *Silvae* even more insistently thematize and invert the social and economic relations between the center and periphery. Newlands (2002, 38) argues that one of the major themes of the *Silvae* is "the social function of poetry in the Flavian age. From what position should a poet speak? From the heart of Empire or its margins? And can or should the margins be redrawn as the center?" These questions are political and economic as much as they are geographical. The *Silvae* are poems that speak directly to the political center of the empire in the city of Rome, but do so from a politically peripheral position. As a sort of evolution of the pastoral, they are both internal and external to the city, precariously balanced between engagement and detachment. In *Silvae* 2.2, for example, Statius writes in the Campanian villa of Pollius Felix, a wealthy former local official who remained in the luxurious countryside (Newlands 2002, 154). In this poem Statius celebrates the *locus amoenus* of the Campanian villa separate from Rome, and praises Pollius for the Epicurean detachment that Statius lacks:

Vive, Midae gazis et Lydo ditior auro,
Troica et Euphratae supra diademata felix,

quem non ambigui fasces, non mobile vulgus,
 non leges, non castra terent; qui pectore magno
 spemque metumque domas voto sublimior omni,
 exemptus fati indignantemque refellens
 Fortunam; dubio quem non in turbine rerum
 deprendet suprema dies, sed abire paratum
 ac plenum vita. nos, vilis turba, caducis
 deservire bonis semperque optare parati,
 spargimur in casus: celsa tu mentis ab arce
 despicias errantes humanaque gaudia rides.

Stat. *Silv.* 2.2.121–32

Live, richer than the treasures of Midas and Lydian gold, fortunate beyond the crowns of Troy and the Euphrates, you whom the dubious fasces do not wear out, nor the changeable crowd, nor the laws, nor the camps; who with a great heart master hope and fear, above every vow, immune from the fates and rebuffing indignant Fortune; whom the final day will not catch in the dubious whirl of things, but prepared to depart and satisfied with life. We, the common mob, always prepared to desire and to devote ourselves to temporary goods, are scattered to chance: you look down on us wandering ones from the lofty citadel of the mind and you laugh at human joys.

Statius, a native of Naples (Neapolis), is caught between his desire for the action and engagement of the imperial center in Rome on the one hand, and the pleasure of luxurious detachment in Campania on the other. Although geographically close to Rome, Pollius' detached Campanian villa with its Greek roots and wealth represents a literary and cultural periphery within Italy itself (Newlands 2002, 159). The position of Naples as a cultural center calls into question what the central activity of Rome is. Is the political and military activity of the imperial court and the armies the central activity of Rome, or is it more Roman in the Flavian period to write poetry in Campania?

The dynamic of the relationship between Rome and Naples in *Silvae* 2.2 provides the background for an exploration of center and periphery in the third book. Newlands (2002, 37) offers a brief outline of the structure of this book, noting that the first and last poems on the peripheral Naples frame the middle “three poems concerning three men in service to the imperial court.” Here I would argue in addition that each of the poems individually problematizes the center/periphery relation. Statius dedicates this book to Pollius, he begins and ends the book with Campanian themes, and in the middle poems he deals with the military and economic relations between the imperial center and the farthest of provinces. The first poem of the book describes Pollius' rededication of a temple of Hercules on his estate. As in 2.2, Statius praises the tranquil luxury of Pollius' villa, this time as a peaceful retreat for Hercules from his efforts, and in particular the ones that have left his club “soaked in copious blood of kings” (*regum multo perfusum sanguine robur*, 3.1.35). Campania is an Italian retreat from the bloody politics of rule, but this time that rule is not centralized in Rome but diffused by the journeys of Hercules.

In the opening poem of Book 3, Statius presents an Italian retreat from the bloody business of empire diffused rather than centralized, and he follows it with a poem that places the activity of empire at the edges of the earth. Just as Silius located the Flavian emperors on the geographical peripheries of the empire, Statius depicts the military

activity of empire on the margins of the world. The poem is a farewell to Maecius Celer, who will take up a military command in Syria. The Bay of Naples in particular and Ausonia as a whole now become the center from which Statius looks to the periphery as he invokes the Nereids to escort Celer's ship from Italy:

vos quoque caeruleum ponti, Nereides, agmen,
 quis honor et regni cessit fortuna secundi,
 (dicere quae magni fas sit mihi sidera ponti),
 surgite de vitreis spumosaе Doridos antris
 Baianosque sinus et feta tepentibus undis
 litora tranquillo certatim ambite natatu,
 quaerentes ubi celsa ratis, quam scandere gaudet
 nobilis Ausoniae Celer armipotentis alumnus.
 Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.13–20

You also, Nereids, blue army of the sea, to whom the honor and fortune of the second kingdom has fallen, (may it be allowed for me to say that you are the stars of the great sea), rise up from the glassy caves of foamy Doris and in rivalry wander with peaceful swimming the bay of Baiae and the shores pregnant with warm waves, seeking where the lofty ship is, which Celer, the noble son of Ausonia, mighty in war, rejoices to board.

These Nereids are natives of Baiae and they escort a son of Ausonia on his way to Syria. The dynamics of center and periphery in the passage are complex. In *Silvae* 2.2, Campania was a disengaged retreat from the political center, and in 3.1 it was a refuge from political violence, but now it becomes the Italian center from which Romans disperse their power. The business of empire takes place not in central Italy, but in peripheral Syria. And in case Syria is not peripheral enough, Statius specifies that Celer might as well be going to the absolute ends of the earth:

sed merui questus. quid enim te castra petente,
 non vel ad ignotos ibam comes impiger Indos
 Cimmeriumque chaos?
 Stat. *Silv.* 3.2.90–2

But I have been entitled to complain. Why did I not go as your energetic companion when you were seeking war, even to unknown India and the chaos of the Cimmerians?

Celer might as well be shipping out to the eastern limit of the world in India or the northern land of Cimmeria. Moreover, as the poem continues, Statius suggests that Celer's journey might include discovering the source of the Nile, stretching his journey to the far south as well (*Silv.* 3.2.107–8). Statius here imagines accompanying his Roman patron not from Naples to Rome, but from Naples to the very ends of the earth. Like Silius, who represents the Flavian emperors on the periphery rather than in the center, Statius in *Silvae* 3.2 represents their agent Celer as performing the work of Rome at the edges of the empire and indeed the world. The contrast between the first and second poems of *Silvae* 3 presents two different ideas of patronage: one patron is a politically detached Epicurean in a tranquil retreat from the business of Rome, but located in the

Italian center of the empire, while the other is a Roman patron engaged fully in the business of Rome, but located in the Syrian periphery and beyond. The juxtaposition of the two patrons inverts the center and periphery, as Italian detachment meets with peripheral engagement and activity.

Following the second poem of Book 3, which places the center on the periphery, the third and fourth poems place the periphery in the center. *Silvae* 3.3 is dedicated to Claudius Etruscus, mourning his father's death. Etruscus is very wealthy, as his father, a freedman from Smyrna, oversaw the imperial treasury. Not only is the poem about an immigrant from the East, but it also describes in grandiose terms the central consumption of peripheral resources:

iamque piam lux alta domum praecelsaque toto,
intravit Fortuna gradu; iam creditur uni
sanctarum digestus opum partaeque per omnis
divitiae populos magnique impendia mundi.
quicquid ab auriferis eiecat Hiberia fossis,
Dalmatico quod monte nitet, quod messibus Afris,
verritur, aestiferi quicquid terit area Nili,
quodque legit mersus pelagi scrutator Eoi,
et Lacedaemonii pecuaria culta Galesi
perspicuaeque nives Massylaque robora et Indi
dentis honos: uni parent commissa ministro,
quae Boreas quaeque Eurus atrox, quae nubilus Auster
invehit: hibernos citius numeraveris imbres
silvarumque comas.

Stat. *Silv.* 3.3.85–98

And now a lofty light has shone on the pious house and towering fortune has entered at full stride. Now is entrusted to one man the distribution of the sacred resources and the riches produced by all the peoples and the expenses of the great world. Whatever Iberia sends forth from the goldmines, what shines on the Dalmatian mountain, what is swept up from African harvests, whatever the floor of the boiling Nile threshes, and what the underwater searcher of the Eastern sea collects, and the cultivated herds of Lacedaemonian Galaesus, and transparent snow and Massylian oak and the treasure of the Indian tusk: the things Boreas brings in, and fierce Eurus, and cloudy Auster, are entrusted to one minister: you would sooner count the winter rain and the leaves of the forest.

The description of the centralization of the resources and products of the peripheries of the empire at first seems to be a straightforward definition of the economics of center and periphery. The exploitative center consumes the resources produced by the peripheries (Rowlands 1987, 4–8). There could hardly be a clearer statement of the centralization of fiscal authority in Flavian Rome. Nevertheless, the influx of foreign wealth here enriches, not an ancestral Roman, but an Eastern freedman and his son. The central control of resources is delegated to an immigrant, and while this process does Romanize Etruscus, it also threatens to make the imperial court Eastern.

The dynamic of making the imperial court Eastern is even more apparent in the fourth and penultimate poem of the book, on the dedication of the lock of Earinus, a eunuch freedman of Domitian. Earinus is not only an immigrant from Pergamum, but he remains

culturally Pergamene in the court of Domitian, both because he is a eunuch and because he sends his lock to Asculapius not in Rome, but in Pergamum. Statius points out that Domitian has now forbidden the practice of castration, calling it *nefas* (unspeakable) and *sinistra* (immoral) (3.4.74–7), in the process dooming Earinus to perpetual foreignness. When Venus picks him up, she dresses him in Tyrian, not Roman, fashion (3.4.55). Moreover, the constant emphasis on Earinus' beauty not only feminizes him as an Easterner, but also reduces him to a virtual decoration in Domitian's Eastern court. The contrast between traditional, pastoral Roman austerity and the Eastern luxury of the imperial court comes through especially as Venus surveys Domitian's palace:

Nec mora iam Latii montes veterisque penates
Evandri, quos mole nova pater inclitus orbis
excolit et summis aequat Germanicus astris.
Stat. *Silv.* 3.4.47–9

Without delay now there are the Latian hills and the home of old Evander, which Germanicus, glorious father of the world, refines with new material and makes equal with the highest stars.

Domitian has remade Evander's Palatine, turning the humble origins of the place into a magnificently luxurious new palace, including his decorative favorite, Earinus. In the process he has turned the Roman center Eastern, and the persistence of Earinus' Pergamene origins suggests that rather than Romanizing the provinces, the dynamic of imperial centers and peripheries has rather provincialized Rome.

The final poem of *Silvae* 3 departs from the relations between Rome and the East and returns to the relations between Rome and Naples. After dwelling for three poems on figures of the imperial court, in 3.5 Statius announces his withdrawal from the court and return to his birthplace. As it was in the first poem of the book, Naples is a retreat from the pressures of Rome (Henderson 2007). The Capitol has refused his poetry (3.5.31–3) and Statius has almost died (3.5.37–9), and so he attempts to persuade his wife to leave the city. He points out that Claudia is reluctant to leave Rome for Naples even though it is close by, but she would be urging departure if the journey were to the edges of the earth:

quas autem comitem te rapto per undas?
quamquam, et si gelidas irem mansurus ad Arctos
vel super Hesperiae vada caligantia Thyles,
aut septemgemini caput impenetrabile Nili,
hortarere vias.

Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.18–22)

But through what waves do I take you as my companion? And yet, even if I were going to the freezing north to stay, or beyond the gloomy waters of Hesperian Thule, or the impenetrable source of the sevenfold Nile, you would be urging departure.

It is puzzling that Claudia is reluctant to go to Naples, but Statius assures us that she would be happy to go to Thule or the source of the Nile. Statius seems to be suggesting an equivalence between the very center in Rome and the farthest peripheries of the world. Anywhere is better for Claudia than Naples. The answer to the puzzle lies in the

middle three poems of the book. These poems make such a connection between Rome and the peripheries that they become one. Rome and the far provinces are where the action is, and the real opposition is not between the geographical centers and peripheries of the empire, but between the engagement of Rome and the provinces on the one hand, and the disengagement of Naples on the other. For Statius, at least in the third book of the *Silvae*, the roles filled by the center and the peripheries are the same.

5 Moral centers and peripheries: Juvenal's *Satires*

Statius, at least in general, positively values the centralization of the peripheries and the peripheralization of the centers, although some recent scholarship has suggested that the poem on Earinus in particular questions the new valuation of Eastern luxury in the court (Newlands 2002, 105–21). Juvenal, on the other hand, working through the same social and economic dynamics of center and periphery, assesses the confusion of the roles of center and periphery negatively, although perhaps with some ironic detachment. Whether positively or negatively valued, and whether in earnest or ironically, both Statius and Juvenal work through the Flavian entanglement and inversion of center and periphery. For Juvenal, the threatening presence of the peripheries in the center is most apparent in Book 1 of the *Satires*. In the programmatic first poem, Juvenal explains that immigration is one of his primary motivations for writing satire:

cum pars Niliacae plebis, cum verna Canopi
Crispinus Tyrias umero revocante lacernas
ventilet aestivum digitis sudantibus aurum
nec sufferre queat maioris pondera gemmae,
difficile est saturam non scribere.

Juv. *Sat.* 1.26–30

When that member of the Nile's mob, when that native slave of Canopus, Crispinus, waves summer gold on sweaty fingers, his shoulder hitching up a Tyrian cloak, and he is unable to bear the weight of the great gem, it is difficult not to write satire.

The Egyptian Crispinus, who rose to equestrian status under Domitian, is like Statius' Earinus an example of the foreignness in the center of the empire. *Satire* 4 is devoted to Crispinus and Domitian, emphasizing that Crispinus is not only in Rome, but exerting Eastern influence on the imperial court. And although at the beginning of *Satire* 2 Juvenal threatens to escape this state of affairs by moving *ultra Sauromatas* (beyond the Sarmatians; 2.1), the actual escape is that of Umbricius, who in *Satire* 3 moves to Campania to escape the foreignness of Rome. As in Statius, the real choice is not between the center in Rome and the peripheries of the empire, but rather between the foreignness of Rome where the periphery is in the center, and the retreat of Campania where a sort of periphery can be even more detached from Rome than the edges of the earth.

While the first book of *Satires* criticizes the presence of the peripheries in the center, *Satire* 15, set in Egypt, demonstrates the presence of the center in the periphery. Although the setting is 127 CE (15.27) and thus no longer focused on Domitian's

empire, it is nevertheless indicative of the aftermath of Flavian culture that Juvenal is shocked at the Romanization of the provinces:

nunc totus Graias nostrasque habet orbis Athenas,
Gallia causicos docuit facunda Britannos,
de conducendo loquitur iam rhetore Thyle.

Juv. *Sat.* 15.110–16

Now the whole world has Greek Athens and ours, eloquent Gaul has taught British lawyers,
Thule is now talking about hiring a rhetorician.

The exaggeration that Thule is discussing hiring a rhetoric teacher shows the extent to which the center is being relocated to the periphery. Although here Juvenal is not explicitly critical of the development, he nevertheless notes that alongside the presence of the peripheries in the center, the center is also present in the periphery. Moreover, there are traces of the “noble savage” in the poem, as long-civilized Egypt compares unfavorably to the uncivilized fringes of the world:

qua nec terribiles Cimbri nec Brittones umquam
Sauromataeque truces aut inmanes Agathyrsi,
hac saevit rabie imbelle et inutile volgus
parvula fictilibus solitum dare vela phaselis
et brevibus pictae remis incumbere testae.

Juv. *Sat.* 15.124–8

The effete and useless mob, used to giving tiny sails to clay boats and to leaning on the short oars of painted pottery, rages with this madness as never the terrible Cimbrians or Britons, and wild Sarmatians or monstrous Agathyrsians.

The manly barbarians of the far north are aggressive, but less savage than the civilized and effete mob of Egyptians (Shumate 2006, 139). To the extent that the peripheries become civilized by the center, they increase their capacity for moral failure. In *Satire* 15, as in the first book, the source of the anger of Juvenal’s speaker is the confusion of the roles of center and periphery.

6 Global centers and peripheries: Pliny the Elder and Josephus

Poets are not the only Flavian authors to thematize the inversion and confusion of Flavian centers and peripheries. The great geographer of the period, Pliny the Elder, decentralizes Rome and Italy. One way in which he does this is in the organization of his geographical books. Strabo, writing in the Augustan period, arranges his material in a clockwise circle around the Mediterranean, beginning with the far west of Europe, moving through Europe, then Asia, and finally ending with the far west of Africa. Pliny, on the other hand, arranges his geography in a more linear fashion from west to east. He, like Strabo, begins with the far west of Europe, but after completing eastern Europe, he

moves back to the far west of Africa and proceeds eastward to conclude with the far east. Strabo's large-scale vision of the world is a ring around the Mediterranean in the middle, which facilitates an integrated framework of center and periphery. Pliny's vision rather imagines each of the three continents more separately and does not encourage an organization around a center and a periphery.

There is a useful passage for comparison in Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*, where, in a speech attempting to persuade his people not to resist Roman rule, Herod Agrippa II gives an overview of the Roman empire (2.357–87). He lists the peoples who have submitted to Rome in order to impress upon the Jews how powerful Rome is and how little shame there is in acceding to Roman domination. Agrippa's catalog of the empire is not, however, geographically organized. In its broad sweep the catalog covers Greece, then Asia, then moves through Europe, followed by Parthia, then Africa, and finally Egypt. Whatever Josephus' organizing principle may be, it is not geographical and it follows neither Strabo nor Pliny. As a provincial noble with connections to the center, Josephus has not absorbed a Roman view of the organization of the empire, whether in Pliny's linear fashion or Strabo's axial one. There is no discernable, large-scale geographical center and periphery, but only Roman conquest of a large number of peoples. With its lack of such an organizing principle, Josephus' geographical excursus demonstrates a pure form of the center/periphery relation that Pliny's geography obscures. There is Rome and there are the many peoples ruled by Rome. No other geography matters to Agrippa. Such a direct, hierarchical relation displays the apparent centralization of authority and homogeneous Romanization of the provinces that the central, Roman literature of the period problematizes and obscures.

It is not only in his broad, geographical organization that Pliny challenges the center/periphery model. One of his subtler and more powerful challenges is in his report of Pompey's boast that he had received Asia as the farthest of provinces and returned it as the center of the homeland (*Asiam ultimam provinciarum accepisse eandemque mediam patriae reddidisse*, NH 7.99, cited in Nicolet 1991, 33). Cicero seems to have understood this boast to mean simply that when Pompey received the command, there was no Roman territory beyond the province of Asia, and that Pompey extended the empire enough that the limit of the province of Asia was no longer the limit of Roman control (*De. Prov. Cons.* 31). It may be the case that both Pompey and Pliny understand the boast in the same way as Cicero, but the context of the report in Pliny suggests otherwise. He notes that *summa summarum in illa gloria fuit* (it was the crowning achievement of his glory, 7.99) and lists it among the greatest achievements in Roman history. It is likely that Pliny means here that Pompey made the Asian frontier of central importance to the empire, which indeed history would bear out as Pompey's eastern campaign had enormous consequences for the future of Rome. Moreover, a generation later Florus would describe the achievement in similar terms: *sic Pompeio duce populus Romanus totam, quam latissima est, Asiam pervagatus, quam extremam imperii habebat provinciam mediam fecit* (Thus with Pompey as leader the Roman people spread through all of Asia in its widest extent and made the province which it was holding as the furthest of the empire into the middle, 1.40.3, cited in Nicolet 1991, 50 n. 23). The continued interest in the precise terms of Pompey's boast suggests that in the Flavian period and its aftermath the centralization of the furthest of provinces resonated with a cultural inversion of center and periphery.

Indeed the Flavian problematization of center and periphery did not end with the reign of Domitian. Juvenal's backward glance at the court of Domitian is similar to Tacitus' backward glance at the northern peripheries under Domitian's reign. Figures such as Calgacus in the *Agricola* and the noble Germans invert the expected social and moral relationships between the center and periphery as the inhabitants of the northern periphery are corrupted rather than improved by the civilization of Rome (the moral inversion of center and periphery in Tacitus, especially in relation to the idea of the noble savage, is well discussed in Evans 2003 and Shumate 2006). As Juvenal represents the center as the place that is least Roman of all, Tacitus represents the periphery as the scene of true Romanness. Not only the Britons and Germans, but even good Romans under Domitian, such as Agricola, can only express their Roman virtue in the far provinces, away from the influence and control of the imperial center. Moreover, although Tacitus' explicit comparison of Domitian to Nerva at the beginning of the *Agricola* suggests that the inversion of center and periphery is a uniquely Flavian, or even Domitianic phenomenon, subsequent history suggests otherwise. Increasingly the center of the empire would move along with the emperor, Caracalla would go a long way toward eliminating the special position of Italy, and eventually the capital would shift to Constantinople. While the Augustan revolution established Italy as the firm, geographical center of the empire and the world, this was not in fact either natural or permanent. Already in the Flavian period the same forces that appear to produce the centralization of authority and the establishment of frontiers also produce powerful cultural challenges to the center/periphery worldview. In authors as ideologically diverse as Statius and Juvenal, and as formally or generically different as Silius and Pliny, the common thread of inversion of center and periphery runs through the Flavian age.

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FURTHER READING

The starting point for any study of spatial relations in Rome is still Nicolet (1991, originally published as *L'Inventaire du monde* in 1988). For a focus on the frontiers in particular, see Whittaker (1994 and 2004), as well as Mattern (1999) and Ando (2000). Although its conclusions are no longer widely accepted, the impact of Luttwak (1976) makes it worth looking into as well. On ancient geography, see especially Romm (1992), whose opening pages provide a helpful general analysis of the historical development of Roman geography. On the representations of centers and peripheries in Roman literature, see especially Evans (2003), Newlands (2002), Pomeroy (2003), and Shumate (2006). For a more historical approach to centers and peripheries in the ancient evidence, see Shaw (2000); there are as well numerous helpful articles in Rowlands, Larsen, and Kristiansen (1987).

CHAPTER 13

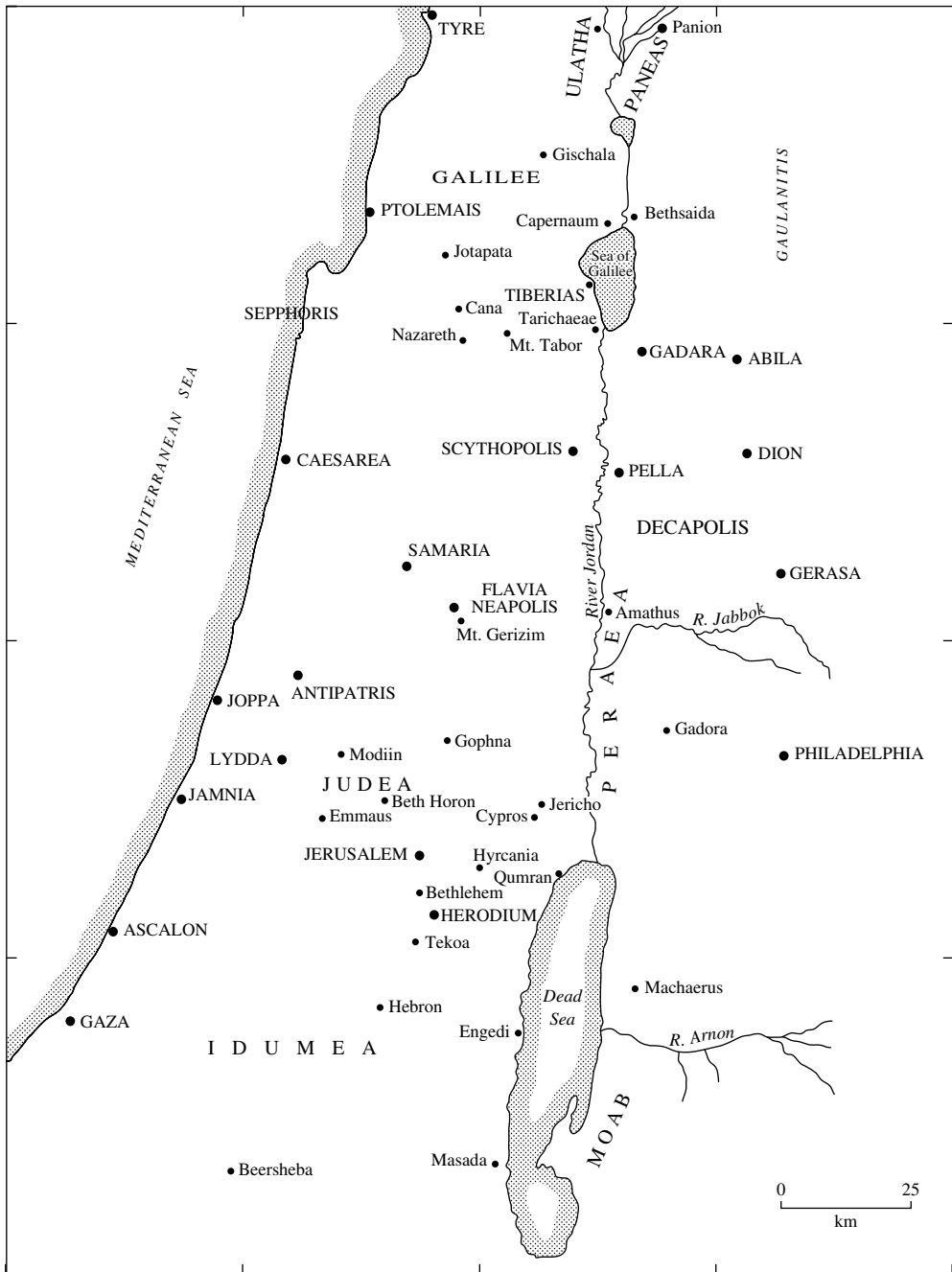
Flavian Judea

Mark A. Brighton

Introduction

Judea was extraordinarily important for the Flavians. When the Judean rebellion began in earnest in 66 CE, Nero appointed Vespasian commander of the military campaign to suppress it and re-establish Roman control. It proved to be a fateful appointment, providing Vespasian with the means and opportunity to make a successful bid for the throne in the wake of Nero's downfall and instability that followed (see CHAPTER 2, THE REMARKABLE RISE OF THE FLAVIANS, section 5). Vespasian had largely pacified the province, except for Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings, when he learned that Nero had committed suicide. He suspended the campaign and later, after being proclaimed emperor, handed command of the Roman forces in Judea to Titus. In 70, Jerusalem fell, effectively marking the end of the Judean rebellion. This victory afforded Vespasian the pretext and the means to glorify the new Flavian dynasty at Rome (see CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 1). The defeat of the Judeans, a significant but essentially internal campaign, was presented as an external conquest; a joint triumph was held of such grandeur as had not been seen since Augustus' triple triumph. A magnificent Temple of Peace was constructed, part of a lavish building program at Rome that was financed in large part by the spoils from the Flavian conquest of Judea. The annual temple tax, which Jews throughout the diaspora had sent to Jerusalem, was now imposed by and collected for Rome. New coins were struck with the legend *Judea Capta* (Judea conquered), enshrining the defeat of the Judeans as the preeminent military exploit of the new dynasty.

Despite its importance for Flavian propaganda and finances, there is little evidence to suggest that the province of Judea itself was a particular focus of Flavian attention after the fall of Jerusalem. It must be conceded, though, that there is such a paucity of evidence for these years that reconstructing the history of Flavian Judea is extraordinarily



Map 13.1 Flavian Judea and neighboring areas

difficult. What can be pieced together suggests that while the Flavians sought to preempt future rebellions, they apparently took no steps in Judea to suppress either what they would have termed Judean “philosophy” or distinctive Judean customs. Vespasian stabilized the province with the continuous presence of a legion under legates of praetorian

rank. Prior to the revolt the Roman procurators had interfaced with the Judean nobility and the chief priests, but after the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, these Judean leaders ceased to be an important voice in Judean affairs. Indeed, the revolt and its aftermath accelerated a transition, already well under way, from priestly to rabbinic authority, a transition that the Flavians allowed and perhaps even encouraged.

1 Sources

Though Josephus is the principal source for all things pertaining to late Second Temple Judaism and Judean affairs through the Judean revolt, he has comparatively little to offer for the years following. None of his works maintains a sustained focus on this period. His first, *The Judean War* (*Bellum Judaicum*), relates the events of the Judean revolt and is thus an important source of information for early Flavian Judea; but it has little to offer after the reduction of Masada (73 CE). His other surviving works add precious little to the topic at hand. His second and largest work, *The Judean Antiquities* (*Antiquitates Judaicae*), traces Jewish history in 20 volumes from the Biblical creation account to the Judean procuratorship of Gessius Florus (64–66 CE). Josephus devotes a third work, his autobiographical *Life* (*Vita*), to his brief public career, focusing primarily on his activities in Galilee during the course of the revolt in order to give a favorable accounting of himself as a general. A final work, *Against Apion*, amounts to an apologetic and panegyric of Judaism in two books. Tacitus unfortunately runs dry for this period: at the beginning of the fifth book of the *Histories* he announces an account of the fall of Jerusalem (*Hist.* 5.2), and he must have written as well about the province of Judea under the Flavians, but this part of the work has not survived. The only other literary sources for the period are found in rabbinic literature – the collections of sayings attributed to various rabbis, whether opinions on particular topics or comments on the sacred text. Several traditions pertain directly to the response of Jewish religious leaders to the destruction of the temple. But scholars debate their usefulness as historical testimony: the sayings were written down more than 150 years after the fact by editors who often knew little or nothing about the historical context (Cohen 2010). For the known rabbis of Flavian Judea much important detail went unrecorded and was forgotten; the sayings that do survive are essentially “folk recollections” (Schwartz 1990). As a result it is often doubtful whether a historical kernel may be recovered from a particular saying. That said, rabbinic literature does preserve an early third-century traditional understanding of certain important Judean responses to the destruction of the temple (Neusner 1994). In addition to these literary sources we have various non-literary data. Archaeological remains allow scholars to draw conclusions about life in Flavian Judea. Information may also be gleaned from coins and inscriptions that have been recovered.

2 Subjugation of Judea

When Titus resumed the campaign in Judea in the spring of 70, most of the province had already been pacified. Besides Jerusalem itself, only three fortresses remained under rebel control at Machaerus, Herodium, and Masada. Titus had four legions at his disposal as

well as numerous auxiliaries, and with these he surrounded Jerusalem. The rebel leaders inside the city had been fighting amongst themselves for control, but the proximity of Roman forces compelled them to cease their feuding.

Jerusalem at this time offered an abundance of natural and man-made obstacles to any would-be invader. The Kidron valley to the east and the Hinnom valley to the south and west made any approach from these locations impractical. The entire city was enclosed with a defensive wall, and toward the north Agrippa I (41–44 CE) had added a second wall so as to enclose the expanding city. In addition to these, Herod the Great had enclosed the temple complex, a vast raised area encompassing about 140 000 sq m, with a large retaining wall. Finally, the Antonia fortress, where Roman soldiers normally quartered, abutted the temple complex at the northwest corner.

Titus brought his engines to bear at the north and western part of the city, the only part of the perimeter not protected by ravines. In May, he broke through the first wall, and the second wall shortly thereafter. Titus then turned his attention to erecting a circumvallation around the remaining portion of the city and to capturing the Antonia fortress. Despite the ravages of famine inside Jerusalem, Jewish resistance delayed Titus' capture of the Antonia until the end of July. The Temple itself then remained the last fortified place of resistance but was captured and burned to the ground on 10 Ab (end of August).

With the fall of Jerusalem, Titus considered the campaign essentially complete and so joined his father for the aforementioned triumph in Rome. The reduction of the remaining fortresses (Machaerus, Herodium, and Masada) was left to others. Lucilius Bassus defeated the rebels at Herodium, and excavations there give the impression of a significant defensive structure, yet Josephus dismisses its capture with only a few words (*BJ* 7.163). He has somewhat more to say about Bassus' campaign at Machaerus, a fortress on the eastern side of the Dead Sea, surrounded on all sides by a steep approach, whose defenses had been augmented by Herod the Great. After a digression on the history and geography of the place, Josephus relates how Bassus was in the process of filling in the eastern ravine to approach the city when a Jewish rebel, much admired by those inside the fortress for his bravery and exploits, was captured. Bassus was about to crucify him in full view of those inside the fortress, when out of distress and pity for their captured champion the rebels surrendered without a fight – though some from the town below were slain when they attempted to escape (*BJ* 7.164–209). Although the exact chronology of these two battles cannot be determined, they both probably took place in 71–72 CE.

If Josephus gives short shrift to the campaigns of Machaerus and Herodium, he has considerably more to say about Masada, which was captured by Flavius Silva in 73 CE. Herod the Great had fortified this stronghold, which is surrounded by cliffs rising hundreds of feet above the surrounding desert. Masada was held by the Sicarii during the revolt. These rebels adamantly opposed Roman rule, distinguishing themselves early in the revolt, according to Josephus, by their use of daggers (similar to the Roman *sica*) in an urban environment. But Josephus depicts them as making use also of other weapons (ὄπλα) – and employing them primarily against fellow Judeans who supported Rome, rather than fighting directly against the Romans (Brighton 2009, 141–50 and 2011, 554–6). They had apparently withdrawn from Jerusalem early in the revolt and moved to this desert fortress. Because of Masada's provisions, cisterns, and the difficulty of the approach, the Sicarii could have expected to withstand a lengthy siege. But Silva determined

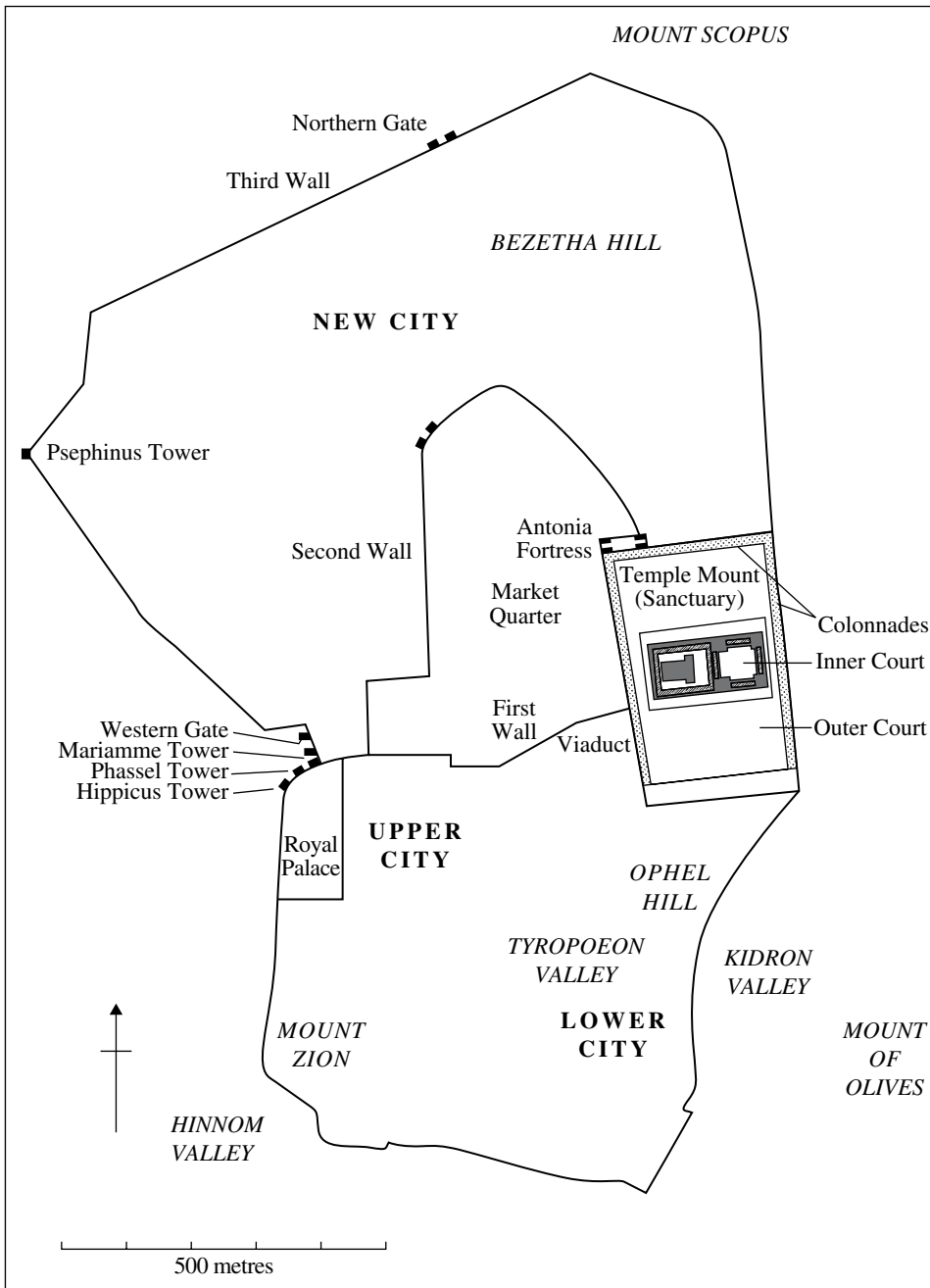


Fig. 13.1 The city of Jerusalem in 70 CE, showing the principal defensive features. After Neil Faulkner, *Apocalypse: The Great Jewish Revolt against Rome, AD 66–73* (Charleston, SC: Tempus, 2002), 299

to make an approach from the western side by raising a vast earthen embankment upon a natural spur so that he might bring his siege engines to bear. Josephus reports that when the rebels realized that the Romans would break through their defenses and that they had no means of escape or victory, they committed suicide *en masse* rather than be captured. Only a few women and children, hiding in a cistern, were left alive. One scholar has called this battle little more than “an interesting logistical problem” and well within the capabilities of a single legion and a few auxiliaries to accomplish within one to two months (Roth 1995). But Josephus magnifies and embellishes it for various reasons. On the one hand the events allow him to reconstruct a story filled with interesting digressions, reversal of fortunes, tragic elements, and set speeches, all designed to thrill his readers. But more fundamentally, he uses this episode to bring to a resolution several key themes at work in *Judean War*. Chief among these is the debilitating effect of Judean *stasis*, that is, the infighting among Judean civil leaders that Josephus makes the chief cause for their destruction. Hardly less important is recurring emphasis on the Roman victory over the Judeans as a product of divine decree. This helps reinforce Josephus’ third major programmatic element, the conquered Judeans’ abundance of admirable qualities, highlighted by the voluntary deaths of the Sicarii (Brighton 2009, 115–18).

Any assessment of Flavian policy in Judea must take into account the destruction of the Jewish temple and the Flavians’ refusal to allow its reconstruction. We might begin with the observation that it was not a normal practice of the Romans to glory in the destruction of the temples of defeated enemies as the Flavians did in this case (Goodman 2007, 431). Josephus, our principal source, indicates that the temple was destroyed against Titus’ will in the heat of battle (*BJ* 1.28). According to him, the temple’s fate had earlier been the subject of a war council. Some advised Titus to have the temple destroyed since otherwise it would serve as a powerful symbol to encourage future rebellion. Others argued that it should be destroyed only if the rebels refused to surrender so that the Romans could avoid such an act of impiety (ἁσέβεια). In the end Titus decided that even if the rebels fought there, he would not destroy it since, if preserved, it would be an ornament to the empire (*BJ* 6.236–43). But according to Josephus, God had resolved upon its destruction (*BJ* 6.250), and so during the course of fighting, Josephus describes how a Roman soldier, under divine impulse (δαίμονίῳ ὁρμῇ), threw a torch into one of the temple’s chambers, whereupon flames shot up in the surroundings (*BJ* 6.252–3). Titus rushed to the scene and repeatedly gave orders for the flames to be extinguished, but his troops refused to listen or obey because they were filled with rage. Titus still endeavored to save the interior, where he himself had gone, yet there too a soldier thrust a torch into the hinges of the gate of the temple and an unquenchable fire suddenly sprang up (*BJ* 6.254–66). Josephus concludes the scenario with words identical to his proem, “Thus, although Caesar wished otherwise (ἄκοντος Καίσαρος), the temple was burned” (*BJ* 6.266).

Josephus’ narrative of the burning of the temple aligns well with the broader themes of *Judean War*. Chief among these is that God had decided to punish the Judeans for their many impieties. The Romans were merely the tools used to accomplish this (Mason 2003a, 69). That is where matters might have remained were it not for another and contradictory account of Titus’ war council concerning the fate of the temple. In the *Chronica* of Sulpicius Severus, an early fifth-century work designed to summarize Christian sacred history, it is reported that some advised that the temple be spared as a

sign of Roman moderation, but Titus sided with others who argued that its destruction was necessary to eradicate more completely the religions of Christians and of Jews. “For even though they were hostile to each other, both had arisen from the same sources, and if the root were destroyed, the branch would easily die” (*Chronica* 2.30.6–7). Bernays (1861) importantly argued that Sulpicius’ account depended upon Tacitus, a view endorsed by many subsequent scholars. Bernays noted that Sulpicius clearly used the *Annales* as a source elsewhere, making it plausible that Tacitus’ *Histories* was the source for the war council at Jerusalem. Tacitus had clearly written an account of the destruction of Jerusalem (*Hist.* 5.2), and even though surviving manuscripts break off before this point, Sulpicius undoubtedly had the complete manuscript at his disposal. Bernays goes on to suggest that Tacitus’ own source was Marcus Antonius Julianus, who wrote about the Judean revolt, and whom Josephus identifies as a procurator of Judea who was present at the council of war (*BJ* 6.238; Bernays 1861, 58). More recent scholarship has cautioned against using Sulpicius systematically to reconstruct Tacitus’ lost account (Barnes 1977; Montefiore 1962); Barnes (2005) nevertheless deems it “incontrovertible” that Tacitus is the source for Sulpicius and that Tacitus therefore presented Titus as making a “deliberate and considered decision” to destroy the temple.

Two other sources are also important for this critical debate. Writing about the same time as Sulpicius Severus, Orosius agrees with him about Titus’ intentions, but offers different reasons. In *Historiae Adversum Paganos*, an account of disasters from Genesis to the time of writing (circa 417 CE), he relates that Titus, after gaining control of the temple, deliberated on whether to preserve it as a memorial of his victory or destroy it since its continued existence would encourage the enemy to rebel. Orosius adds that since the Church had already spread throughout the world and the temple was no longer of any use, it was God’s will for it to be destroyed. Thus Titus ordered it to be burned (7.9). Finally several rabbinic traditions, though varied in detail, all attribute to Titus the desire to destroy the temple. None mention a council of war, but they relate how he entered the temple to defile it by using a prostitute in the sanctuary upon a Torah scroll. He then is said to have ripped one of the curtains with his sword, from which came blood, and Titus therefore believed he had killed the deity Himself (Babylonian Talmud, tractate Gittin 56b. cf. Lev. Rab. 22:3).

We know with certainty that the temple was destroyed and never rebuilt; Titus’ intent, upon which the sources disagree, might well offer an indication of Flavian policy. If Orosius and Severus both depended upon Tacitus, whose account they adapted to their own rhetorical agendas, then it would appear that two ancient sources, rabbinic tradition and Tacitus, line up against Josephus. How do scholars assess these contradictory accounts? Rajak (2002, 206–12) deems it plausible for Titus to have come to either decision, but gives greater weight to Josephus as the most reliable source, as he was present during the siege of Jerusalem and undoubtedly had access to imperial notes. Goodman (2007, 410–23) also thinks it likely that the temple was destroyed by accident in the confusion of battle, with its destruction and the suppression of the Jewish cult subsequently being made to serve Roman propaganda. But others remain unconvinced by Josephus’ account, in part because Josephus himself appears to provide contradictory evidence. Alon (1977, 252–68) points out that Josephus’ portrayal of Titus at the council is contradicted by other passages in which Titus declares that if the rebels do not surrender, the temple will be destroyed. Parente (2005, 63) likewise concludes that

Josephus' representation of Titus is a "fabrication," suggesting that artifacts preserved from the temple, including the golden table, the candelabra, and the interior curtains, provide "irrefutable evidence" that the temple was not destroyed by accident in the heat of battle, but first looted and then intentionally destroyed.

Scholars offer various explanations as to why Josephus would alter these facts in his narrative. Mason (2005) argues that Josephus employs figured speech and irony to undermine any notion of Roman superiority. Thus Titus' clemency is magnified to the point of "gullibility," and Titus himself would presumably be unable to protest too strenuously against Josephus' narrative without exposing himself to charges of impiety. Assuming that, as the balance of evidence seems to suggest, the temple was destroyed deliberately, Rives (2005) plausibly suggests that its destruction is evidence of a gradually developing, empire-wide policy concerning the Jews. While allowing the Jews to retain their own national customs, philosophies, and ethnic organizations, the Flavians may have thought that the abolition of the Judean "civic cult" would diminish the likelihood of future revolt.

3 Reorganization of Judea

Smallwood (1976, 331) identifies two defects of Roman rule in Judea that contributed to the revolt: the poor quality of the Roman procurators and an inadequate military presence. As emperor, Vespasian took immediate steps to remedy these shortcomings. The province of Judea was released from military dependence upon Syria, being assigned its own legion, the *x Fretensis*, permanently stationed in Jerusalem on the site of the former temple. And whereas Judea had formerly been governed by procurators of the equestrian rank, Vespasian now put the province in the charge of imperial legates of the praetorian rank. It is not clear whether these legates ruled under the authority of the governor of Syria as the former procurators apparently had, for Josephus does not specify any change in relations between Judea and Syria (Mason and Chapman 2008, 79–81). Indeed, in the absence of any narrative focus in Josephus, many of the legates of Flavian Judea are known only by name from inscriptions or coins and little more can be said. The careers of those about whom more is known would seem to suggest that Judea remained an important province and a useful stepping-stone in a political career. Sex. Vettulenus Cerialis, who had been in command of the fifth legion (*BJ* 3.310), was given immediate command of the tenth in Jerusalem after the revolt, but he was soon replaced by Lucilius Bassus (71/72). Bassus is probably to be identified with an individual by the same name who was in command of two fleets under Vitellius at Misenum and Ravenna, but who defected to Vespasian. L. Flavius Silva remained in office from 72 until perhaps 81. He had formerly been legate of the *xxi Rapax* in Germany, and his last recorded post was *consul ordinarius* in 81. One Cn. Pompeius Longinus is listed as legate in 86 and may have then become suffect consul in 90 and legate of Moesia Superior in 93 and of Pannonia in 98 (Smallwood 1976, 546–8).

Which native Judeans interfaced with these Roman legates is not made clear in the extant sources. Prior to the revolt the nobility at Jerusalem and the chief priests were the most important political leaders. The evidence suggests that they would meet at least periodically in council, the Sanhedrin, to decide important internal matters (Goodblatt 1994).

Josephus wrote in the late 90s as if the restoration of priestly civil leadership was still possible (*Ap.* 2.193–8), and Schwartz (1990, 87–95) argues from a careful analysis of *Judean War* and *Judean Antiquities* that Josephus was still advocating their restoration in the early Flavian period. On the other hand, Goodman (1987, 232) argues that the Romans simply did not trust this group and therefore would not have allowed its leadership. But in point of fact, the influence of the priests ceased in the absence of the temple. The Judean nobility in Jerusalem no longer existed, and there is no evidence for any governing national councils. Goodman points out that had the Romans sought a single individual with loyalty to Rome to rule as a client king, Agrippa II would have been an obvious choice. He had tried to dissuade the Judeans from revolt, had campaigned with Titus, and after the revolt was allowed to retain his territories. His sister Berenice lived for a time in Rome with Titus, and during this period he was honored with the rank of praetor, which may have included grants of land (*BJ* 7.23–4; Cass. Dio 66.15.3–4; Goodman 2007). In any case, his fortunes do not appear to have risen any higher than this. Titus eventually sent Berenice away for political reasons. Agrippa's rights to issue coinage were suspended for a time in the early 80s, but then restored in 84/85. Josephus evidently still considered him a person of some standing while he was authoring the *Vita* in the 90s because he boasts therein of his endorsement concerning the accuracy of *Judean War* (*Vita* 355–6; see Schwartz 1990). In the end, though, it was not the Judean nobility, nor the priests, nor a client king that assumed leadership of the Judeans. The evidence points rather to the gradual emergence of rabbinic authority at Jamnia (Yavneh) with Judeans governing themselves at the local level (see section 4 of this chapter).

As to the land itself, Josephus reports that after the revolt Vespasian gave orders to Bassus that “all the land of the Judeans should be leased/sold (ἀποδόσθαι) for he had not founded any city as his own there in preserving the land for himself but had only given over to 800 veterans a place called Emmaus, about thirty stadia distant from Jerusalem, as a settlement” (*BJ* 7.216–7). The second part of this statement, that Vespasian founded no city in Judea, though technically true, does not give a complete picture. The status of several cities was changed. Caesarea Maritima, the seat of Roman government in the province, was given the status of a Roman colony. In Samaria, resettlement of the area of Shechem was initiated by establishing the new provincial city of Flavia Neapolis circa 72–73, as evidenced by coins minted there about 81 (Chancey and Porter 2001, 185). Moreover, the permanent stationing of the tenth legion in Jerusalem effectively transformed that city from the center of Judean civic and religious life to a place of Roman authority and military control. The first part of Josephus' statement, concerning Vespasian's “leasing” or “selling” of land, admits a number of interpretations. It is clear that Vespasian gave over a portion of the land at Emmaus to Roman veterans. Moreover, he had already resettled at Jamnia and Gophna some Judeans who sought to remain loyal to Rome during the course of the revolt (*BJ* 4.444, 6.115). Josephus also mentions in *Life* that Titus gave him new tracts of land on the plain, perhaps west of Jerusalem near Jamnia, because Josephus' former holdings were rendered unprofitable due to the proximate Roman garrison (*Vit.* 422; see Mason 2003b, 167). Applebaum (1977) adds to this evidence several notices in rabbinic literature that certain Jews were made to lease land from Gentiles but that others were able to buy and sell land. From this Applebaum concludes that Vespasian probably confiscated property only in those areas where Judeans had been active in the revolt against Rome, giving it to

Roman aristocrats or veterans. He suggests that in many of these places the former Jewish landowners became tenants and were made to lease the land at oppressive rates. Isaac (1998, 113–6) understands Josephus’ notice differently: observing that the Greek word ἀποδόσθαι never means “lease” elsewhere in Josephus’ works, he argues that it must mean “sell” here, so that Vespasian ordered all confiscated property to be sold. Vespasian, therefore, did not keep any land in Judea, other than those areas that were imperial property before the revolt, including the Balsam plantations, Jamnia and its surroundings, and the valley of Jezreel. Since Vespasian did not found any cities in Judea, Isaac believes it would have been possible for Jews to buy land, whereas the establishment of large veteran colonies would have prohibited this. Isaac suggests that Josephus’ intent, in this brief notice, was to emphasize the moderation of the emperor in his treatment of the Jews after the revolt, as evidenced by the fact that they were able to continue buying and selling land.

Concerning the civil rights of Jews in the reordered province of Judea, neither Josephus nor any other source has much to say. Josephus merely adds to the statement on Vespasian just cited that “he also imposed a tribute upon Jews wherever they lived, ordering them to pay two drachmas every year to the capital, the exact amount they paid formerly to the temple at Jerusalem. And such then was the state of affairs among the Jews” (*BJ* 7.218). Isaac (1998, 118) concludes from this that there was nothing worth saying about the civil rights of Jews in Judea, in other words, there was no significant change. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, we might then suppose that the civil rights for most Jews in Judea remained much as they were for other Jews throughout the empire after the revolt. In that regard Josephus elsewhere states that despite the urging of local citizens, civil rights for Jews at Antioch and Alexandria were not curtailed (*BJ* 7.100–11; *AJ* 12.121–4). Therefore, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it would seem reasonable to suppose that a majority of Jews in Judea, who had not participated in the revolt, continued to enjoy the particular privileges granted them by Julius Caesar such as the right to gather on the Sabbath day, to build synagogues, and to follow other Jewish regulations. We might also suggest, however, that the ridicule, suspicion, and local acts of violence aimed at Jews throughout the empire during the Flavian years would have existed also for Jews living in the province of Judea (see Schäfer 1997, Gruen 2002b).

4 Judean life and religion

The economic wellbeing of many of these inhabitants can be surmised not only from Josephus’ statements about Vespasian’s disposing of the land, but also from the archaeological record. The assertion of Applebaum (1977, 393–4) that, after the revolt, Judea was largely desolate and in economic straits is unpersuasive. That the Flavians were concerned with encouraging economic growth in the region is evidenced by the new growth at Gerasa, in the region of the Decapolis. For Chancey and Porter (2001), the archaeological record provides strong evidence for a flourishing economy in Palestine under the Flavians. Mildenberg (1984) reaches a similar conclusion, using different evidence: the quality and volume of coins struck during the bar Kochba revolt (132–135 CE) suggest that Judea had indeed prospered in the preceding decades. Numerous foreign flans (coins) were overstruck by the rebels, and there would have been no use for such coins

without the presence of a large peasant population. “The inevitable conclusion arises that between 70 and 132 CE Judaea remained rather heavily settled by Jewish peasants who had neither been enslaved nor driven from their land after the *Bellum Judaicum*” (Mildenberg 1984, 85). Grabbe makes a more modulated assessment, arguing that economic hardship would have been experienced in and around Jerusalem, whence the rebels had fled and where most of the fighting took place. It was there as well that the loss of the temple complex with its tithes, coffers, and associated businesses, would have been most keenly felt. “There seems little doubt that Judea as a whole had reverted much more to a subsistence economy that consisted chiefly of tenant farmers, hired laborers, crafts workers, and small businesses ... But one should be cautious in building on the assumption that the whole of Palestine suffered economic and agrarian disaster as a result of the First Revolt” (Grabbe 1992, 583). The same scholar estimates that the economic recovery from “postwar depression” to the former level of “agrarian prosperity” would have taken a matter of years rather than decades, with the area around Jerusalem being the last to recover (Grabbe 1992, 583).

This brings us to the loss of the Jewish Temple, which was perhaps the single most significant economic blow to the region. We might begin by observing that at least for one segment of Judeans, the new and growing followers of Jesus, the loss of the temple probably had little impact. For them, indeed, the temple had already ceased to be a focus of faith. The apostolic writers had expressed the idea earlier that the believing community now itself functioned as the spiritual temple of God, a place where the Spirit of God lived (1 Peter 2:5, Ephesians 2:14–22). By his death on the cross they taught that Jesus of Nazareth had offered the perfect sacrifice for sin to God, and that any further sacrifices at the temple were superfluous (Hebrews 10:1–14). The sacrifices they now offered to God were the spiritual sacrifices of a renewed and godly life (Romans 12:1–2). For all these reasons the centers of the new Christian faith had moved from Jerusalem to places like Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and Rome itself.

The destruction of the temple did, however, produce a crisis of faith for Judean Jews. For the second time in their recorded history the Judeans had to cope with the loss of the central focus of their religious life and faith. Prior to its destruction it was incumbent upon all Jews to gather at the temple several times each year for the major festivals. These included Passover, Pentecost, Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement. As Grabbe (1992, 529) notes:

There were additional aspects to being a Jew, including ethical and moral conduct, private devotions, and theological speculation, but participation in the temple cult was the *sine qua non* of service to God. This was how sins were forgiven and how one renewed the relationship with God. This is what it meant to be a temple-centered religion.

Of course for many Jews, even those in Judea, traveling to Jerusalem to worship several times a year would have been impractical. The pressure of making a living, as well as the distance, must have compelled many to remain home. Yet even for these, temple worship would have remained the ideal and the aspiration (Grabbe 1992, 529).

And yet, however devastating the destruction of this religious center, it remains true that Jews in Judea were fully able to preserve their religious identity without it. For, quite apart from temple worship, there were many distinctive characteristics common to

Jews everywhere, including the belief in one God, the rejection of images in worship, the centrality of the Torah to regulate life and faith, circumcision, avoidance of certain foods, and gathering for meditation on the Sabbath. Indeed, centuries before the Israelites had learned to cope with the loss of the temple when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed it the first time and took large portions of the people into exile (586 BCE). At that time elements of synagogue worship began to emerge, places where the Torah would be read, songs sung, and prayers offered. In the Flavian period synagogues were found throughout the empire and already constituted the main internal governing institution among the Jews. As places for worship, for instruction in the Torah, for communal dining and festivities, where also records were kept, funds were stored, and measures enacted among the Jews, synagogues served to “entrench a sense of collective identity” (Gruen 2002a, 131). The evidence points to the existence of synagogues in Judea in the first century, and so it may reasonably be concluded that here as well they played a crucial role in preserving Jewish religious identity after the destruction of the Temple.

Archaeological evidence for the period immediately prior to the revolt points to the existence of what Andrea Berlin terms “household religion.” Jews throughout Gaulanitis, Galilee, the Judean heartland in the south, and Idumea adopted similar and conspicuous markers of religious identity outside of halakic or priestly concern. These included the presence of ritual baths (*mikva’ot*), use of stone dishes and stone tables, locally manufactured oil and wine, and plain, knife-pared oil lamps. Also distinctive were understated burial practices, with the deceased placed in undecorated family tombs. “The remains reflect shared beliefs as well as a broad desire for material possessions that would encode and reflect religious identity” (Berlin 2005, 467). All this suggests the degree to which religious identity permeated everyday life of most Judeans; and such “household” religion clearly did not cease with the destruction of the Temple.

Only two groups of Judeans deviated significantly in lifestyle and cultural practice. The community at Qumran, geographically isolated, lived entirely apart and abided by their own strict community rule, and the Jerusalem elites adopted various Hellenistic styles as evidenced by some dining rooms, the use of decorated Italian serving dishes, and elaborate public display tombs with large courtyards and impressive facades.

Several Jewish apocryphal writings of the period bring to light how some Jews interpreted the Judean defeat at the hands of the Flavians. 4 Esdras in particular focuses on the questions of theodicy and God’s judgment upon the Romans. The author cannot be determined, but it is likely that he wrote towards the end of Domitian’s reign or shortly thereafter. In his work, amounting to a series of revelations given under the name of Ezra, the author attempts to make sense of God’s sovereign choice of the Jews as His people in light of the Judean’s present experience. How can a just God punish his chosen people through the hands of the Romans and yet not also punish the Romans even more severely? How does God preserve his justice in the presence of such evil? How will God preserve his people? The author leads the reader through such questions to reaffirm God’s mercy and righteousness. In strong messianic tones, the author affirms how Rome will indeed be overthrown by God’s Anointed One on the Day of Judgment. Until that day God’s people must devote themselves to the Torah. The author affirms that in meditating upon it and performing it, God’s people choose life, honor God, and enjoy his blessings (deSilva 2002).

The emphasis on meditating upon the Torah, so strongly present in 4 Esdras, aligns well with the aforementioned shift from priestly to rabbinic authority, and all scholars

point to the destruction of the Temple as a watershed moment in this movement. But the authority of the priests may have been already weakened before the revolt, for their authority was centered in Jerusalem where they tended to interface more with the Romans, whereas local disputes were no doubt handled by local religious authorities (Goodman 1987; Goodblatt 1994). Sivertsev (2005) also traces a transition, already well under way before the revolt, in which authoritative teaching concerning Jewish life and faith was increasingly located in rabbinic circles. In a similar vein, Cohen (1984) suggests that the destruction of the Temple effectively brought Judean sectarianism to an end. It demanded a restructuring not only of the cultic and ritual life of the Judeans, but also of their inner religious identity and experience. This reconstruction found its center in the rabbinic community that began to emerge at Jamnia, where rabbis gathered after the revolt. As Neusner (1979, 22–3) puts it:

It was the genius of rabbinic Judaism to recognize that the people might reconstitute the Temple in its own collective life. Therefore the people had to be made holy, as the Temple had been holy, and the people's social life had to be sanctified as the surrogate for what had been lost. The rabbinic ideal further maintained that the rabbi served as the new priest, the study of Torah substituted for the Temple sacrifice, and deeds of loving kindness were the social surrogate for sin-offering, that is, personal sacrifice instead of animal sacrifice.

Jamnia was located on the coastal plain to the west of Jerusalem and it came under the leadership first of rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai and then of rabbi Gamaliel II. According to rabbinic tradition, ben Zakkai escaped Jerusalem while it was under siege. The legend survives in four different sources, two in *Abot de Rabbi Nathan*, one in the Babylonian Talmud (tractate Gittin 56a–b), and one in the Lamentations Rabbah (1:5). Though they differ in certain details, all agree on these essential points. The rebels in command of besieged Jerusalem had commanded that no Jew be allowed to leave the city and go over to the Romans. However, ben Zakkai escaped secretly in a coffin and appeared before Vespasian, whom he greeted as a king. Vespasian rejected the greeting as treasonous, but ben Zakkai insisted on the basis of Jewish sacred prophetic literature that Jerusalem would only be conquered by a king. Three days later a report came to Vespasian that Nero was dead and that he indeed had been proclaimed emperor. He therefore summoned ben Zakkai and asked him to make a request, which he would grant. Ben Zakkai asked for Jamnia, where he might devote himself to study with other learned Jewish scholars; this charter was granted by Vespasian. The unhistorical nature of the story is apparent if for no other reason than this: Vespasian was not present at the siege of Jerusalem. Saldarini (1975) suggests that this tale arose from Vespasian's earlier quartering of certain escaping Jews at Jamnia; one of these was ben Zakkai, who began to teach there in such a manner that his school became an authoritative center for Judaism. The scholarly consensus is that the legend of ben Zakkai's encounter with Vespasian developed later to explain and legitimize the school (Neusner 1966; Saldarini 1975; Schäfer 1979). Rabbinic tradition records that subsequently, during the reign of Domitian, Gamaliel II became the leader. He was probably a member of an influential clan of Pharisees since the authority of his grandfather, Gamaliel I, is attested in the New Testament (Acts 5:34, 22:3; see Goodblatt 1994, 143). The tradition reports that he traveled around Judea;

perhaps this was to “impose” upon the Judeans the religious leadership of the rabbis at Jamnia (Oppenheimer 2005, 145–55).

Schäfer (2003, 134) points out that the rabbis at Jamnia shared characteristics with earlier scribes in their emphasis upon interpretation of scripture, and also with Pharisees in their emphasis on the sanctity of all areas of life. Though it would be erroneous to suggest that at this early date the meetings at Jamnia amounted to a synod making official and authoritative pronouncements for all of Judaism, all scholars agree on the importance of Jamnia for the future viability of Jewish life and faith. While other known religious leaders pass from history – priests, Pharisees, Sadducees – the rabbis laid the foundations for the continuance of a strong and vital religious identity. It was at this early date under the Flavians at Jamnia that they embarked upon the preservation of the Jewish faith after the destruction of the Temple – establishing the sacred calendar and matters of worship in the absence of temple, devoting themselves to the study of the Torah, and considering how the sanctity of the temple might yet extend through other means into all areas of life.

Did the Flavians know of the scribes at Jamnia and if so, did they sanction its authority? Here we are on less certain ground. Few would care to defend as historical the meeting between Vespasian and ben Zakkai (contrast Alon 1977, 276, defending the “essential validity” of the account, together with Smallwood 1976, cited in the next paragraph of this chapter). Traditions about Gamaliel II being granted authority are considered by some critics to be more plausible. Gamaliel II is reported to have made visits around Judea evidently to investigate and oversee Jewish religious affairs. The tradition thus attributes to him a considerable sphere of influence, and so we might expect that he would have some dealings with Roman authorities. In fact, rabbinic tradition makes it clear that Gamaliel II once made a trip to Syria to obtain “permission/authority from the hegemon in Syria” (Mishnah Eduyot 7:7). Exactly what permission or authority he obtained is not specified, and scholars debate the point.

Since Josephus tells us that Vespasian had relocated Judeans to Jamnia, most scholars agree that the Romans would have been aware of the presence of a group of rabbis. But Goodman suggests that the Flavians would not have endorsed or even commissioned their authority. This, he suggests, is rather a retrospective claim of later generations. It is more likely that the Flavians would have simply ignored them (Goodman 1987, 234). On the other end of the spectrum, Smallwood suggests that ben Zakkai did receive from Vespasian permission to set up a school to prepare for the postwar reconstruction of Judea. Just as the Romans had earlier appointed high priests and client kings to serve as national leaders in support of Roman interests, so the Flavians appointed first ben Zakkai and later Gamaliel II as national leaders among the surviving Judeans (Smallwood 1976, 348–9). Goodblatt takes a more studied approach. Concluding from the rabbinic evidence that Gamaliel II was indeed viewed as a patriarch among the Judeans in the late first century, Goodblatt then asks how he came to have this authority; he suggests that it was not because of his illustrious ancestry, or that he was a scion of a patriarchal line, or a person of great wealth. His delineation as patriarch probably arose as a result of Roman recognition. The Romans had put an end to all institutions of Judean national self-government, but local governing institutions among Judeans in all likelihood remained in place, for as Goodblatt observes, it would have been impracticable for the Romans to install non-Jewish elders and scribes throughout every village to oversee

marriages and divorces, to lend money, to adjudicate small disputes, etc. What the Romans needed and desired at the national level was not the restoration of self-government but the establishment of a “leader of a nation,” that is, a “mutually recognized liaison.” The Romans would not have chosen a priest because the priests had been too heavily implicated in the revolt. Gamaliel, on the other hand, was a teacher and already had the respect of the Judean people, and so the Romans endorsed his authority (Goodblatt 1994, 218).

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FURTHER READING

Though not about Flavian Judea in particular, Rajak (2002) offers a good introduction to the life and work of Josephus, the principle source for first-century Judea. Schwartz (1990) attempts to reconstruct political trends in Flavian Judea through an analysis of how these leaders are presented in the works of Josephus. Grabbe (1992) is a sound general introduction to the period with helpful material on Flavian Judea in particular. Good background for Judean self-governance during the Flavian period is provided by Goodblatt (1994), a survey of the idea of "monarchy" from the Second Temple period through the early centuries CE, the period of the Mishnah and Talmud. Rives (2005) provides an excellent overview of the scholarly issues on the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and integration of that event with Flavian policy. Schäfer (1979) is a useful discussion of the legend of ben Zakkai and the beginnings of the rabbinical center at Jamnia.

CHAPTER 14

Flavian Britain

Gil Gambash

Introduction

For a brief moment, under the reign of the last of the Flavians, Roman Britain and the island of Britain became one. Or so, at least, Tacitus would have us believe, when he declares Britain thoroughly subdued on account of Cn. Julius Agricola's victories in northern Scotland (Tac. *Hist.* 1.2). The topic of Roman expansion, accordingly, has dominated modern discussion of Flavian Britain. It has shared the stage, though – at least in more recent, post-colonial, decades – with internal issues of the governance of those Britons already subjugated. For nearly half a century, following the Roman invasion of the island in 43 CE, the inhabitants of ever-expanding portions of the island – locals as well as newcomers – were occupied with processes of pacification and consolidation in conquered areas, in addition to campaigns of conquest. It is therefore only appropriate, in a *Companion* to Rome in the Flavian Age, to approach Flavian Britain from such a perspective, looking in tandem at local Roman policies of expansion, and at the nature of the relationship between the Roman administration and the indigenous population.

The two topics are of course tightly bound together. Insofar as regards our reconstruction of a historical reality, it is a simple truth, surprisingly often overlooked, that intentions of expansion must have taken into consideration the perceived degree of stability in Rome and in the provinces. On other, historiographical, levels, the discussion of “Romanization” has tended to dwell on the issue of conquest and local resistance, seeking, by emphasizing the persistence of the latter, to undermine the impact of the former on indigenous societies (Thébert 1978 on Bénabou 1976). Recent scholarship on Roman Britain has for the most part embraced notions of relentless Roman expansion; and, though arguably in conflict with such a hypothesis, ideas of ruthless occupation have taken over the discussion of Rome's contact with subjugated Britons. Local resistance has been given

pride of place, conjectured to have been an ever-present force in Roman Britain, and to have led, ultimately, to the banishment of Rome from the island (Mattingly 2006).

To a great extent, the period immediately following Rome's invasion of Britain has dictated the tone in such *longue durée* analyses, seeing as it did expansion reaching its highest point, and witnessing simultaneously the initial effects of conquest on the local routine. Moments of urgent, even rash, expansion no doubt occurred during Rome's first decades in Britain. And, as in any other province, here too the odd governor or procurator may be found who adopted an oppressive approach towards locals. However, much of the evidence is far from offering conclusive testimony on the matter. Novel analyses, as well as recent finds, have in fact suggested a different picture, one depicting a reality more temperate than commonly imagined for Britain under early Roman rule.

1 Pre-Roman Britain

In the century and a half before the Claudian invasion, society in southeastern Britain saw intensifying processes of change in aspects of both its economy and social structures. The archaeology of various material aspects of local societies indicates that, as early as the second century BCE, common social habits came to represent more or less distinct regions across the island. A correlation has been noted between such aspects as settlement patterns, ceramic styles, and coin usage, and this correlation goes on to match later social groupings, known to us also from the literary sources.¹

The major social groupings identified in this way are referred to by archaeologists as tribes, which were in turn composed of smaller sub-units or clans. As these groups endured, their need for a tribal focus increased, and local centers soon appeared. From early in the first century BCE we have evidence of nucleated settlements, developing mostly by way of unplanned, organic growth, associated with the working of economic forces (Jones 1991, 53–65). Caesar's description of the capital city of King Cassivellaunus, presumed ruler of the Catuvellauni, is demonstrative of the primary stage of these centers (Caes. *BGall.* 5.21). The nearing Roman world contributed to intensifying economic activity, and the original centers therefore experienced faster development in the period between the invasions of Caesar and Claudius. By the turn of the millennium, a center like Camulodunum (Colchester) would appear to have served all the functions of occupation, religion, craft activity, and possibly even the residence of the elite (Collis 1984, 224–6).

The presence in Camulodunum of this latter group, the elite, is a reminder that the development of cultural and political centers must have been closely associated with significant processes of social change. Just as they required cultural foci, the consolidating social groups needed leaders, and processes of centralization in political power are well attested. Below the top rank of the leaders, social structures across the southeast of the island seem to have become gradually more stratified. Contacts with Gaul after Caesar's invasions, and, even more so, from the time of Augustus on, resulted in the increase of imported goods from the mainland, to be used and consumed mostly by the British elite. Distribution of wine amphorae, for example, or rich burial artifacts, are suggestive of an increasing social differentiation, as well as of a growing upper-class awareness of Italian imports.

While specific events are hard to date accurately, the overall picture of social development in southeastern Britain during this period has been depicted as a “pale reflection” of similar processes familiar to us from contemporary Gaul (Millett 1990, 29–35). Despite interruptions caused by the vicissitudes of the first century BCE, economic ties between Gaul and Britain may be regarded as having been intense and continuous for the most part. The central channel of exchange was between Armorica and Hengistbury Head, and it is perhaps these connections above all that may be seen as having been responsible for the changes witnessed in Britain (Cunliffe 1987). To be sure, it is widely accepted that, by the time of the Roman conquest of Gaul, British culture appears to have been largely similar to the culture dominating continental Europe, from the Danube to the North Sea (Salway 1981, 16–9; Cunliffe 2005, 149–77).

Connections with Rome during this period were tighter than often admitted. The Claudian propaganda that was to follow the invasion was interested in creating a different, more romantic picture, but by the first century, Britain was hardly the remote and barely known “land across the ocean” that Caesar was so curious about. One of the most distinct indications for the adoption by British rulers of Roman attributes of power may be found in their coinage. Starting late in the first century BCE, Romanized features seem to have been added to the prevailing variety of essentially Celticized coin designs (Van Arsdell 1989, for example 404, 1969-1 for Celticized, and 414, 2045-1 for Romanized). Contemporary with this practice is the introduction of Latin legends on the coins, which do not only transliterate from the Celtic languages names of kings and cities, but also make use of basic forms of the language itself, which fact may testify at least to limited Latin literacy within certain circles in Britain (Haselgrove 1987, 26; 201–2). Finally, starting with Tiberius’ reign, some British rulers seem to put the head of the Roman emperor on the obverse of their coins, an act possibly suggesting the offering of allegiance to Roman rule.

Strabo actually saw Britons in Rome, and could base his description of their appearance on this encounter (Strab. 4.5.2). These Britons could have been anything from imported slaves to those British kings who are said in Augustus’ *Res Gestae* to have come to see the *princeps* as supplicants. About the latter we are told that “they have not only dedicated offerings in the Capitolium, but have also managed to make the whole of the island virtually Roman property.” Strabo’s exaggeration aside, the privilege of offering such dedications would have been granted to kings with the status of clients, whereas the circumstances of the dedication could have been the very act of the recognition of these kings as rulers by the emperor (Reusser 1993; Braund 1996, 85).

Caesar, Augustus, Gaius, and Claudius were all approached by frustrated eminent figures from Britain, mostly kings and their sons, some of whom are said to have themselves promoted the idea of a Roman invasion of the island. It is not implausible that Augustus’ repeated intentions to cross the Channel with an army emanated from a wish to enforce the fulfillment of agreements and the payment of due taxes (Cass. Dio 53.22.5, 53.25.2). At least Strabo knows of regular payments of imposts already during this early time (Strab. 4.5.3).

The Britain that Claudius invaded was a place that would have been perceived in Rome as a society moving towards Romanized forms of civilization, familiar, for example, from Gaul; and whose upper classes had in part already started to adopt some specific Roman attributes, that would bring them still closer to the culture of their conqueror.

It was also a Britain already attached, if still loosely and partially, to Roman politics of power, be it through informal personal relations, or by means of more official action, such as diplomatic exchanges, religious dedications, and coin issues. It is with this background in mind that we need to approach the geopolitical map of southern Britain at the eve of the invasion, realizing that the local opposition – above all the Catuvellauni – in fact stood in close contact with Rome until shortly before 43; and that the Roman invading forces most likely had local allies to rely on as they landed – in all probability the Atrebates (Branigan 1985; Cunliffe 2005, 149c77).

2 Claudio–Neronian consolidation

Questions of precedence naturally come to the fore in the case of the ascension of a new dynasty to Rome's imperial throne. It is hardly surprising that Vespasian is recognized on numerous occasions as a ruler shunning innovation and opting for the revival of tradition.² Looking at recently invaded Britain – Rome's most prominent recent acquisition – the heritage of previous governments should have loomed still larger in the eyes of the new emperor. Provincial routine on the island, however, had hardly had a chance to establish itself following the Roman invasion of 43. What Claudius, then Nero, had planned for the region may not be condensed into terms of *imperium sine fine*. The Flavians, both father and elder son, had seen active service in Britain during this period – Vespasian as the commander of *Legio II Augusta* during the first years of the invasion, and Titus as tribune in the early 60s, in the aftermath of the Boudican revolt (Birley 2005, Trib. 7). If we wish to obtain a full grasp of the nature of their decisions, as emperors, regarding the governance of the province, we must first pay heed to the policies of their predecessors.

In the invasion of 43, centralized societies, such as the Catuvellauni and the Trinovantes, once defeated, were subjected to Roman control through their major tribal centers. Camulodunum, for example, became the seat of a legion – probably *xx Valeria Victrix*. Decentralized societies, with numerous smaller units and subsidiary centers, such as the Durotriges and the Dumnonii, had to be subjugated and garrisoned carefully in order to secure calm. Suetonius reports that more than 30 battles were fought and 20 hill-forts (*oppida*) were taken during Vespasian's campaigning in the southwestern regions between 43 and 47 (Suet. *Vesp.* 4). It is, of course, necessary to emphasize the violence of the war itself. Still, to imagine that Roman aggressiveness endured even once decisive victory had been achieved would be to ignore the general notion of unconditional acceptance of Roman rule among initially hostile elements. The archeological picture of rapid demilitarization of the south suggests that the Roman administration was not punitive or vengeful once peace had become tenable.³

Client kingdoms naturally emerged alongside the new province. The one person whom we know played a major part in ruling the southern British tribes soon after the invasion was Cogidubnus (Coates 2005 and Black 2008; the name may have been Togidubnus). Tacitus mentions him in a brief survey of Roman governors of Britain, saying that he was given certain states, and that he was most faithful to the Romans (Tac. *Agr.* 14). An inscription from Chichester refers to him as Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus, and titles him “great king of Britain” (*RIB* 91 = *CIL* 7.11). It is clear from his nomenclature that he was granted Roman citizenship by Claudius. Other client relations must



Map 14.1 Flavian Britain

have been established in the north. The triumphal arch of Claudius at Rome, as well as its more modest replication at Cyzicus, suggest that perhaps as many as 21 British kings were implicated in the emperor's victory (*CIL* 6.920 = *ILS* 216; *CIL* 3.57061 = *ILS* 217; see Barrett 1991). The kingdom of the powerful Brigantes, later to absorb much of the attention of the Flavian administration, is likely to have come to terms at this point.

Now, after completing the first stage of the invasion of Britain in 43, Claudius, before returning to Rome, is said to have directed Plautius, his general in command and the first governor of the new province, to conquer the "remaining" parts (τὰ λοιπὰ, Cass. Dio 60.21.5). Such a statement – whether we ascribe it to Claudius himself, or to the historian Cassius Dio – can make sense only when applied to an area whose borders are clearly defined in the mind of its audience. Plautius is clearly meant to be seen by Dio's readership as instructed to subjugate "the remaining parts [of the island of Britain]." The possibility must be kept in mind that, at this early stage, under favorable circumstances, Claudius' own plan was indeed to pursue the conquest of the entire island of Britain.

It is worth noting, however, that, still under this same emperor, expansion in Britain was deliberately and purposefully brought to a halt, probably not by reason of the lethargic nature of some of the province's governors, as Tacitus would have us believe, but rather due to the central government's wish to achieve full pacification prior to the consideration of further conquests. Here is a typical case of a historiography not aligned with governmental policy: Tacitus expects Claudius to press ever forward, in pursuit of the realization of the only kind of conquest imagined by the historian – that of the island in its entirety. Such expectations persist in Tacitus' narrative while describing periods when the Claudian administration – and, later, the Neronian one – clearly opted for consolidation. Agricola may well have been the originator of such an approach, and a main source of influence over the historian – who was his son-in-law and admirer, and may have escorted him to Britain during his service there as governor. Modern-day ideas of relentless expansion in Britain are affected to a greater or lesser degree by this same "insular bias."

Shortly after his successful invasion of the island, Claudius realized that rapid expansion came with a price. Plautius' replacement, P. Ostorius Scapula, found himself coping at once with internal restlessness among Rome's allies – notably the Iceni and the Brigantes – as well as with foreign threats to the recently established province, orchestrated by the persistent Catuvellaunian chieftain, Caratacus. The governor died while still in office – "exhausted by the burden of his anxieties" – soon after eliminating these threats (Tac. *Ann.* 12.31–2; 39). The very nature of Claudius' next appointment divulges the emperor's shift of policy. Didius Gallus was an experienced senator, and a well-trusted friend of Claudius (Birley 2005, Gov. 3). He was also significantly older than most other known British governors, and, perhaps as a result, devoid of ambition for military glory. Claudius' choice of Gallus would have taken into consideration the man's advantages for the task, as well as his willingness to abide by a policy of consolidation.

In the *Annals*, Tacitus maintains that, throughout his term in office, Gallus was content merely with holding back the enemy (Tac. *Ann.* 12.40). The historian offers a little more credit – though hardly less criticism – in the *Agricola*: "Didius Gallus consolidated the conquests of his predecessors, and advanced a very few positions into parts more remote, to gain the credit of having enlarged the sphere of government" (Tac. *Agr.* 14). A need to shift the focus from expansion to the consolidation of the province must, then, have been acknowledged by Claudius and prescribed to his appointed governor. Neither

Claudius, for the rest of his reign, nor Nero, during his first years as emperor, stop to reconsider this new policy in Britain, since we find Gallus in Britain holding his position until 57 – and that while remaining loyal to his original instructions. Though Nero was hardly keen on taking the field himself, his early days demonstrate evident eagerness for imperatorial titles, of which he had taken seven by the year 59 – mostly through achievements in the East (Griffin 1984, 230–4). It would have been undoubtedly clear to him that, so long as Gallus remained governor, no such titles were to be obtained from Britain.

The southeastern part of Britain must have been considered calm enough by the time Gallus was finally replaced with expansionists of the sort of Q. Veranius and C. Suetonius Paullinus, who aimed their efforts at the Silures and at Wales more generally. Veranius, who died within a year after stepping into office in 57, reportedly left in his will a testimony to the resumed spirit of conquest, bragging that, had he had two more years, he would have conquered “the province” for Nero (*addidit subiecturum ei provinciam fuisse, si biennio proximo vixisset*, Tac. *Ann.* 14.29). In the context supplied for this statement – reminiscent of the reported exchange between Claudius and Plautius 15 years earlier – it is not impossible to read “the entire island” for *provinciam*.

The picture depicted thus far is hardly one of persistent advance. Furthermore, it may be inaccurate – if not altogether erroneous – to approach prolonged periods of consolidation, such as the one occurring between 52 and 57, as moments spent in mere anticipation of the next campaign of conquest. The Roman administration would hardly have had the capacity to produce long-term plans of such strategic nature (Whittaker 2004). Instead, we might consider the possibility that the nomination of Gallus as governor in 52 signaled the end of immediate Claudian aspirations for further conquests.

Nero’s own attempts at expansion in Britain were brought to a complete and utter halt by the Boudican revolt in 60/61. The rebellion started in East Anglia while the governor, Suetonius Paullinus, was campaigning in northern Wales. The spark was supplied by a corrupt procurator, independently conducting an operation for the annexation of the Icenian client kingdom upon its king’s demise. The opposition raised by this king’s wife, Boudica, was soon answered by the disgruntled Trinovantes, said by Tacitus to have suffered from a gradual encroachment of the Roman colony at Camulodunum.

A close scrutiny of the outbreak of violence, as well as of the years that followed the revolt, reveals a remarkable dedication on the part of the Roman administration, both in the province and in Rome, to placate the local vexation (Gambash, 2012). Retributory measures undertaken by Suetonius Paullinus were cut short by his untimely recall to Rome, and by his replacement with P. Petronius Turpilianus, who from the outset adopted a conciliatory policy towards the indigenous population. Even before the appointment of the new governor, a new official, C. Julius Alpinus Classicianus, was sent to Britain to assume the office of procurator (Birley 2005, Proc. 3). His likely Celtic origin may well have stood behind his proven sympathies towards local needs.

Turpilianus’ succession in 63 by M. Trebellius Maximus – a man of no military experience, we are told – obviously did not herald any change in this policy. Indeed, Tacitus finds it conceivable that the allegedly corrupt governor preferred to turn his greed towards his own troops, rather than to rob his provincial subjects (Tac. *Hist.* 1.60). Trebellius was rewarded with a particularly long term in office, and was still in Britain when the emperor died in 68. He left it to join Vitellius’ camp a year later, as a result of a mutiny of the troops.

3 Flavian expansion

For nearly a whole decade, up to the year 69, the local population in Britain had been governed not merely justly, but with exceptional care for its interests. Other than the likely annexation of the kingdom of Cogidubnus upon the king's death (either in the late 50s, or after the Boudican revolt; see Braund 1996, 108–12), the province did not change significantly in size. Both Turpilianus and Trebellius seem to have put at the top of their priorities the securing of the goodwill of the indigenous population. And the latter repaid this approach by remaining peaceful when the military resources of the British governor dwindled, his status within his own troops was shaken, and his peers from other provinces were engulfed in a fierce civil war.

It is this background that emphasizes the presence of the insular bias, outlined above, in treatments of Vespasian's accession to the imperial throne. Tacitus, and frequently modern historians after him, approaches the first decade and a half of Flavian supremacy as a continuous, planned sequence of expansion campaigns in Britain, whose ultimate goal was the conquest of the entire island (Tac. *Agr.* 17.1). In the mirror of hindsight, the picture may well appear justified, and the possibility should not be overlooked that even the main decision-makers of the period bragged such original intentions in retrospect. Yet, a close reading of the sources brings out a nuanced reality, and a more complex Roman approach to expansion emerges – one far less strictly planned, and even opportunistic at times. It is perhaps mostly through recognizing the arbitrariness that characterized many of these conquests that we can explain their transitory nature.

When the newly enthroned Vespasian set to the task of reviewing the Roman provinces and their administration, Britain with its regular garrison of four legions would have been one of the first to be put under the lens. Earlier in 69, Vettius Bolanus was the man elected by Vitellius to replace Trebellius as governor of the province (Birley 2005, Gov. 8). It would be difficult to regard this appointment as having been influenced by the post-Boudican Neronian policy; Vitellius was still on the move when Trebellius fled to him from his province, and Bolanus is said to have been chosen to replace him *e praesentibus* (from among those present, Tac. *Hist.* 2.65). His experience included a mission to Armenia in 62, as Corbulo's legionary legate (Tac. *Ann.* 15.3; Stat. *Silv.* 5.2.31–41).

Insofar as regarded provincial affairs and foreign policy, Bolanus maintained the same peaceful line that had prevailed before his arrival. The year 69 was hardly the time for renewing expansion projects in Britain. Troops from Britain were required to fight for Vitellius in his confrontation with the Flavians in October (see for example, Tac. *Hist.* 2.57, specifying 8000 troops). And on the island, not only did insolence in the camp persist, but the Brigantian Cartimandua, Rome's ally, was attacked by Venutius, her former husband, and lost her kingdom to him (Tac. *Agr.* 16; *Hist.* 3.45). Having delivered Cartimandua from danger in a way that evoked Statius' praise, Bolanus adopted the policy of his immediate predecessors as soon as calm returned to the region and to the empire (Stat. *Silv.* 5.2.140–9).

It is significant that what little information Tacitus supplies regarding Bolanus may have come from Agricola himself, who took over the command of *Legio xx Valeria Victrix* in 70, and would have been familiar with the policy of the period. The historian complains, as ever, about “that same inaction regarding the enemy” (Tac. *Agr.* 16). A remark he makes earlier in the *Agricola* hints at a lenient approach in internal affairs:

“Britain was then under Vettius Bolanus, who governed more mildly than suited so turbulent a province” (Tac. *Agr.* 8). Bolanus pursued this policy, overlooking the Brigantian problem, for two more years – hardly a brief term for a forced appointment, made under shaky political circumstances.

Similarly to Nero, then, Vespasian was in no rush to replace a governor who had shown no inclination to embark on expansion campaigns in Britain, or to reconsider the now long-enduring policy of non-expansion on the island. This fact is even more noteworthy than in the case of Nero: the ascension of a usurper – let alone of a new dynasty – is often thought to be accompanied by excessive eagerness for glory obtained in the field. In the case of the Flavians, the entire treatment of the Jews has been explained according to such lines (Goodman 2004). Yet Vespasian did not turn to Britain, which he knew well, for that purpose.

Even once a new governor, Petillius Cerialis, was finally assigned, no campaign of expansion followed, for the simple reason that the Brigantes were no longer at this time an ordinary foreign enemy awaiting conquest (Birley 2005, Gov. 9). Since the Roman alliance with Cartimandua, formed in 51, when the queen turned the fugitive Caratacus over to the Romans, this had been a full-fledged client kingdom.⁴ As long as it remained loyal, the client kingdom would have served as a direct extension of the Roman province itself, and its ruler would have been fulfilling – in operative terms, if not in title – many of the duties of any regular Roman official (Braund 1984, esp. 55–90). Venutius’ coup and the banishment of the pro-Roman queen would have amounted, insofar as regarded the Roman perception of affairs, to a provincial rebellion (Gambash 2009b, 338–88).

Cerialis’ career up to the point of his appointment to Britain shows traits that may indeed better suit the role of a pacifier, than the character of a conqueror. On reading Tacitus’ compliments on the man’s activity, one must bear in mind that these are made in the context of supplying Agricola with an eventful background as a legionary commander (Tac. *Agr.* 8.2–3). Battles against Venutius were quite likely fought, but Tacitus’ oblique description of them – at a time when he could elaborate on the military glory of his father-in-law – raises doubts as to their significance in the campaign: “there were many battles, some not without bloodshed” (*multa proelia, et aliquando non incruenta*, Tac. *Agr.* 17.2). Interestingly enough, a similar structure of double negative is used by the historian to describe Cerialis’ image as a general: “and [Cerialis] himself had a not inglorious military reputation” (*nec ipse inglorius militiae*, Tac. *Hist.* 3.59). When standing on its own, the structure could well be ascribed merely to the Tacitean style. However, our picture of the general’s military mediocrity, well substantiated by reports of various military failures in which he had been involved, makes it tempting to read the litotes as weakening the statement.

Serving in Britain as the commander of *Legio IX Hispana* in 60/61, Cerialis arrived too late to save the Roman colony at Camulodunum from the Boudican rebels. His rash charge against the Britons resulted in disaster (*clades*), seeing the legate’s infantry destroyed and his cavalry put to flight (Tac. *Ann.* 14.32). We are not told how many legionaries were killed – the appraisal of Mattingly (2006, 110) is 1500–2000 troops – but once the revolt had been subjugated the ranks had dwindled enough to demand noteworthy reinforcements (Tac. *Ann.* 14.38). Similar lack of success was demonstrated during the events of 69, much closer to the time of Cerialis’ appointment to Britain, when he was defeated near Rome by the Vitellians (Tac. *Hist.* 3.69–75, 79).

When considering Cerialis' strengths as a nominee for governor of Britain, these appear to suit best the demands of a mission of local pacification. His closeness to the Flavian family – he was probably married to Vespasian's daughter, Domitilla, and possibly fathered a daughter with her (Birley 2005, 65–6) – would have secured loyalty as well as obedience in executing an unaggressive policy, unattractive as he might have found it. He had already seen active service in Britain – as legion commander during the Boudican revolt. In fact, as such, he was the first governor appointed to the island to have had prior experience there, and thus the first with hands-on knowledge of the province's characteristics and problems.

Even taking into consideration Cerialis' failure to shine in the field, the importance of such a background should not be overlooked. As legion commander in 60/61, he was not included in Paullinus' campaign to Wales. After the initial subjugation of the revolt, he would have been employed by the governor in the fierce retribution operations conducted against the surrendering rebels. Rather than having seen action beyond the borders of the province, then, he would have stood in close contact with the local population. He would have witnessed in person the antagonistic reaction of these same populations to Paullinus' vindictiveness, resulting in the recall of the governor to Rome, and in the appointment of new officials to the province – a procurator and a governor – who were accommodating to local needs and problems. To be sure, the cessation of expansion campaigns for a whole decade after the revolt meant that the province he was now sent to govern retained its borders and ethnic structure, as well as its collective memory of the events of 60/61 and of the relative calm that had prevailed there since.

It is noteworthy that early in the year 70, shortly before his appointment as governor of Britain, Cerialis was entrusted by Vespasian with the mission of subjugating a local revolt in Lower Germany (Tac. *Hist.* 4.68, 5.22–6; Joseph. *BJ* 7.82). The reports bring out quite clearly a distinction between the general's lacking military competence and his success in negotiating a cessation of hostilities. Having brought to rest the revolt of Civilis, one may reasonably draw parallels to Cerialis' next mission in dealing with the Brigantian Venutius.

Cerialis successfully completed his task of bringing the Brigantes back under Roman dominance, having dedicated the better part of his three-year service in Britain to the purpose. He probably moved *Legio IX Hispana* to (*Eboracum* (York), and stationed *Legio II Adiutrix* in now vacant *Lindum* (Lincoln) (Hassall 2000, 61). The first Roman fort at *Luguvalium* (Carlisle) was likely built during this period, around 72–73 (Shotter 2000). The shift in Roman efforts westwards, to Wales, during the term in office of Cerialis' successor, must have meant that by late 73, when the retiring governor returned to Rome, the renewed cooperation of the Brigantes had been secured.

Julius Frontinus' campaign against the Silures may in many respects be seen as the outcome of a determined Roman plan to expand into Wales. Unlike the Brigantes, southern Wales remained to all practical purposes foreign enemy territory, never yet conquered or approached diplomatically by Rome, though not for lack of motivation. In our evaluation of Rome's resumption of expansion it is essential to emphasize the fact that the Silures had been consistently inimical to Roman presence in Britain since the early days of the invasion, when they provided shelter for the fugitive Caratacus, and rallied under his leadership to oppose the Roman legions.

Campaigns against this powerful adversary were repeatedly launched, commencing in the late 40s with Ostorius Scapula, who had managed to lose two cohorts before dying in office and on campaign. When Didius Gallus, Scapula's successor, arrived in the region, he found that a whole legion, under the command of Manlius Valens, had been defeated by this same enemy (Tac. *Ann.* 12.32, 39; 40). Seen from the point of view of the Roman administration, the emphasis laid by Tacitus on the stubbornness (*pervicacia*) of the Silures is not exaggerated. Some 30 years after the invasion of Britain, they remained unconquered, and were the most significant enemy of Rome on the island.

Thoughts of the resumption of expansion in Britain would, therefore, necessarily have been equivalent to plans for the conquest and pacification of Wales. We know little about Frontinus' early career, but it must be assumed that Vespasian deemed him suitable – and sufficiently ambitious – for the task. Some evidence points to the necessary military background (Birley 2005, Gov. 10). If Britain was, as we suspect, his first province as governor, then his previous achievements must have been sufficiently impressive to attract the attention of the emperor and to win Frontinus an appointment that was regularly allotted to veteran governors. Our knowledge of his later career corroborates the notion of a bright start. Having completed a successful three-year term in Britain, he is next known to have campaigned with Domitian in Germany in 83, most likely as the legate of the Lower Germany army (Eck and Pangerl 2003). He then served as the proconsul of Asia in the mid-80s (*BMC Ionia*, nos. 133–7; *AE* 1969/70, 593). This career formed the background of his image as a *vir militaris*, one so consensually experienced and successful in military affairs as to write manuals to generals on these very issues (*Strategemata*; *De Re Militari*).

All we hear of the accomplishments of Frontinus in Britain is that he “subjugated the strong and warlike people of the Silures” (Tac. *Agr.* 17.2). This terseness should not detract from the importance of the achievement, as Syme (1936) has pointed out. By the year 77, when he handed the province to Agricola, he had secured the cooperation of the Silures effectively enough as to allow his successor freedom of action elsewhere. As will be claimed in the next section of this chapter, the presence of a squadron of allied cavalry in northern Wales even before Agricola's arrival suggests that also the Ordovices came to terms with Frontinus (Tac. *Agr.* 18.1).

4 Agricola the Administrator

The Roman province grew significantly during the terms in office of Cerialis and Frontinus. Yet this increase in size derived from the annexation of a once-loyal client kingdom, now turned rebellious, and from the defeat of a longstanding enemy. With the resolution of these two problems, Flavian Britain found itself on the doorstep of the region we now call Scotland. The later reputation of Britain's next Roman governor – as the conqueror of Scotland – often casts its aura on this moment. Yet the evidence strongly suggests that the appointment was made by Vespasian with no solid intentions for further conquests in mind.

Born in the year 40, Cn. Julius Agricola assumed the title of Britain's governor at the early age of 37 (Birley 2005, Gov. 11). After he had served as legion commander in Britain earlier in the 70s, he was assigned the governorship of Aquitania, and was recalled

in 76, in order to take the consulship. That same year also saw the betrothal of his daughter to Tacitus. When he arrived in Britain in 77, it was clear that the Welsh campaign had yet to be concluded, since at the very least the island of Mona still remained outside the reach of Roman control.⁵ Yet the task may not have been quite as formidable as Tacitus depicts it.

Firstly, it should be noted that Agricola only crossed to Britain in midsummer. All operations against the Ordovices and the island of Mona were concluded by the end of that same campaigning season. As mentioned above, Agricola's predecessor, Frontinus, had already positioned troops among the Ordovices, and we need not necessarily imagine that the move met at first with active local opposition. Agricola himself apparently made a relevant statement regarding his campaign, one which may be more telling than his son-and-law's efforts at aggrandizement: "But Agricola did not exploit the difficult situation to glorify himself: he described the expedition and victory as keeping the conquered under control" (*nec Agricola prosperitate rerum in vanitatem usus, expeditionem aut victoriam vocabat victos continuisse*, Tac. *Agr.* 18.6). It is conceivable that, after the subjugation of the Silures by Frontinus, the Ordovices preferred to come to terms with the Roman governor. It was only during the gap-period, when no governor was present on the island, that they moved against the *ala* (unit of cavalry) stationed in their territory. If their status had indeed been settled by Frontinus, Agricola's reference to them as a conquered people must have derived from acknowledgment of that status, and not from modesty regarding his achievements.

Mona, to be sure, posed no serious obstacle, and must have been neglected by Frontinus for lack of time. Under Agricola, the island was invaded and conquered only by those auxiliary soldiers whose expertise it was to swim with weapon and horse. In comparison, the opposition met in the same place two decades earlier by Suetonius Paullinus necessitated the building of a special fleet of flat-bottomed vessels, for the purpose of transferring infantry units to the island (Tac. *Ann.* 14.29).

It is arguable that no prospects for outstanding missions of expansion stood behind Agricola's nomination. On the other hand, several indicators suggest that internal provincial issues did form the background of his landing in Britain. At this point, the local Roman administration would have had Wales and its peoples to organize. And, perhaps as a result of Frontinus' intense focus on campaigning abroad, the province itself became restless (Tac. *Agr.* 18.1). The fact must be emphasized that Agricola's previous experience in Britain, both as military tribune and as legionary legate, is unparalleled among known provincial governors. Remembering that Petillius Cerialis, Vespasian's first appointment to the island, was the first of the governors of the province to have served there previously as legion commander, we may argue that the emperor deemed it desirable on these occasions to utilize individuals with previous local experience.

In analyzing the possible motivation behind such appointments, aspects of internal provincial affairs should receive precedence. Familiarity and past contacts of the governor with local populations, and certainly a favorable local opinion of an incoming official, could prove far more beneficial in dealing with internal problems than in conducting foreign campaigns. Such considerations were already successfully employed in nominations made after the Boudican revolt (Gambash 2012).

Agricola, landing in a restless Britain, would have been able to recruit his knowledge of the indigenous population and call on old local contacts in order to ensure the return

of stability. Such a mission would have loomed larger than the conquest of the island of Mona to an attentive central government. Seen in this light, Tacitus' extraordinary elaboration on administrative concerns in Agricola's governorship appears appropriate to the governor's main task. Indeed, it offers us a rare glimpse into the routine of governors who have been named earlier in this chapter as putting greater emphasis on the consolidation of the province. We should therefore dwell on the issue in some detail.

5 Provincial routine

From the early days of the invasion, it is evident that a suppressive approach was *not* routinely adopted in the process of pacification that followed conquest. The extreme case of local resistance is telling: a rebellion that broke out in 48 as a result of an attempt to disarm the client kingdom of the Iceni was quashed by Scapula in battle. Yet, archaeological evidence suggests that the Icenian territory remained sparsely garrisoned after the revolt (Potter and Robinson 2000). And the client status of the Iceni was not terminated until after the death in the year 60 of their king, Prasutagus, the husband of Boudica. Scapula's intense campaigning across northern Wales until his death in 52 indicates that he did not fear further unrest in the east, as does the foundation of an unfortified colony at Camulodunum in 49 (Tac. *Ann.* 14.31; Crummy 1977, 87).

A lenient approach, when successful, would have allowed the gradual withdrawal of garrisons for the sake of further expansion. Rich burials and rural villas indicate that members of the local elite in the provinces, as well as in client kingdoms, were allowed to maintain their wealth and status (Mattingly 2006, 100, 109). Further evidence suggests that religious duties related to the imperial cult were carried out by local notable families already under Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 14.31). To be sure, in early Roman Britain, as elsewhere in the Roman empire, civil administration would have been handed over to the locals, thus relieving Roman officials of the responsibility (Millett 1990, 68; Woolf 1998, 18, 39).

Nurturing such a connection with the locals would have demanded time as well as peaceful routine, resources that campaigning governors did not always possess. The Boudican revolt demonstrates vividly how rapidly the nascent relationship could regress under unfavorable circumstances, with the governor away on campaign. During the quiet 60s, the province gradually recovered from the traumatic events of this revolt, witnessing as it did the rebuilding of such urban centers as Camulodunum, Londinium, and Verulamium, which were destroyed by the rebels (Hingley and Unwin 2005, 70–96). This was probably also the period that saw the administrative center of the province move from Camulodunum to Londinium, as indicates, among other things, the tombstone of the procurator, Classicianus, found in the medieval wall of London (*RIB* 12; Millett 1990, 89–91). It was, however, the Flavian period that moved one step beyond the initial stage of the invasion, laying the foundation for conventional local government, and generating significant urban development.

Existing *civitas* (city) centers won the standard features of Roman urban planning during this period. In Chichester a street grid was introduced in the 70s; in Silchester, in addition to a similar grid, a forum and an amphitheater, both Flavian, have been identified. The first amphitheater in Londinium is also datable to the early 70s; and in Camulodunum the only known circus for chariot races has been excavated. To a great

extent, the development of settlements at this period followed the pattern established by existing Iron Age centers – the *oppida* – and by vacated military sites, with the ever-growing net of roads underlying the process. Among others, the following sites are usually thought to have originated in the Flavian period: Exeter, Dorchester, Leicester, Wroxeter, and Lincoln – the latter being the only known Flavian colony, founded by Domitian in 92 as *Colonia Domitiana Lindensium*, or Lindum (Millett 1990, 85–91).

Just how much free will the local population could exercise in the face of state intervention when choosing to adopt Roman ways of settlement and civic routine is an issue still under debate, with the answer resting probably somewhere in the mid-range of the pendulum (Mattingly 2006, 273). The reality of coexistence between locals and settlers has been underplayed by recent scholarship in favor of an emphasis on moments of tension, as in the prelude to the Boudican revolt (Tac. *Ann.* 14.31). Archeology has revealed on more than one occasion representations of Roman deference towards indigenous practices, even in briefly occupied Scotland (Woolliscroft and Hoffmann 2006, 203–24).

Agricola's main activity during his early governorship reveals the cogs and wheels of the process. Immediately after securing the peace in Wales, he is reported to have turned his attention to internal issues, aiming above all to guarantee the goodwill of the local population. Among other problems, he reorganized corn exactions, reducing the burden of the tribute on individuals (Tac. *Agr.* 20). Just and sensible governance stands out as the single most essential element in his conciliatory approach. And the key to achieving this purpose appears to have rested in his selective appointment of public officials – perhaps the micro-level parallel to Rome's nomination of British governors. Such a philosophy of governing cannot be considered temporary, and should be regarded as representative of Agricola's entire term in office. Nor are we obliged to assume that the next campaigning season distracted the governor from working on these and other issues to improve the relationship with the local population. Other than the mention of "sudden raids" (*subitis excursibus*), no reports of military campaigns are available for the year 78. Instead, diplomacy appears to have taken precedence, and we hear at this point of Agricola promoting the benefits of peace, and of numerous independent states, possibly already in southern Scotland, giving hostages in return for his leniency.

Internal provincial issues continue to dominate the narrative of Agricola's second year in Britain, and we hear of the promotion of public and private building, and of the adoption by locals of several Roman attributes, among them the toga and the Latin language (Tac. *Agr.* 21.1–2). Possible indication of the promotion of such civic matters has been recognized in an inscription from Verulamium, mentioning the governor by name, and suggesting that a public building was decorated during his term in office (*JRS* 46 [1956], 146 = *AE* 1957.169).

The second part of Agricola's term in office saw him advance into Scotland, though not necessarily, as will be discussed in section 6 of this chapter, by means of intense campaigning. Still, in an administration so attentive to provincial affairs, what became of the routine running of the province when the governor was absent for prolonged periods? The newly attested official function of the *iuridicus* makes its appearance in Britain around this time, perhaps not surprisingly. The main duties of the *iuridicus* consisted in civilian matters, and he is conventionally thought by scholars to have served as deputy to the governor, when the latter was on campaign (Mattingly 2006, 275). Two *iuridici* are known for the Flavian period: the first, C. Salvius Liberalis, served under Agricola; the

second, L. Javolenus Priscus, served around the mid-80s, under one of Agricola's successors (Birley 2005, Iurid. 1–2). It may be not least as a result of this administrative innovation that the resources of the local governor could be stretched to the northern ends of the island without risk to stability in the south.

6 Agricola the Conqueror?

The emphasis put by Agricola on provincial affairs during his first two years in Britain throws into high relief the significant penetration into Scotland, achieved by him during the following years. Tacitus locates the Roman army as far north as the river Taus (arguably the Tay) by the end of the year 79; furthermore, there is strong indication that fortification work took place in the northern areas just as early (Woolliscroft and Hoffmann 2006). Previous campaigns of reconnaissance and pillaging in Scotland should be assumed, not only for Agricola, but also for his immediate predecessors. Such campaigns are familiar from frontier zones all around the empire, and, while they could result in the ultimate conquest of new territories, they often saw Roman armies retreat to their home base without lasting effect. Long before being appointed Britain's governor, in 41 CE, Suetonius Paullinus crossed the Atlas mountains in such capacity (Plin. *NH* 5.1.14).

The fortifications on the Forth–Clyde line and in the Tay area, however, suggest more permanent intentions. If we accept the view that Roman armies reached – and possibly even crossed – the line of the Forth–Clyde in 79 in order to stay, we must mark this year as being significantly different from Agricola's previous two years in office. An attempt to evaluate the background for the move does not yield an easily defined policy. For one thing, there is no evidence of an organized aggressive campaign; rather, the report suggests that a customary pillaging raid among new peoples met with no opposition, and that the army marched with only bad weather impeding its progress. Once again, it is hard to imagine fierce fighting in the absence of any acclaim of such by Tacitus.

The advance of the Roman troops across a sizable territory, inhabited predominantly by the Selgovae and the Votadini, was fast enough to allow the inception of work on fortifications in that same campaign season (Tac. *Agr.* 22.1). Could it be that Agricola was seizing on an opportunity without awaiting approval of the new emperor Titus? Such initiative on the part of confident generals was not unheard of. In 47 Claudius had to intervene against unauthorized operations conducted by Corbulo among the Chauci, to the extent of forbidding attacks on Germany and ordering the garrisons to be withdrawn to the left bank of the Rhine (Tac. *Ann.* 11.19–20). A summer that saw both the death of an emperor and the disastrous volcanic disaster on the bay of Naples would have provided an ambitious governor with suitable conditions for realizing expansionist aspirations.

Titus' secure position upon his father's death and his established military renown meant that an "accession campaign" was unnecessary. Indeed, it was actions such as his generous involvement in the aftermath of the eruption of Vesuvius that would bolster his popularity as *princeps* (Suet. *Tit.* 8; Cass. Dio 66.24). To be sure, Titus did not decline the opportunity presented him by Agricola to be hailed *imperator* for the fifteenth time (Cass. Dio 66.20.2–3); yet he obviously preferred the consolidation of the newly established frontier to further expansion northward – or, for that matter, westward. Agricola's

wistful musings regarding the obtainability of Ireland reveal his restraining orders (Tac. *Agr.* 24). If anything, Titus' approach to Britain during his short-lived rule is reminiscent of Vespasian and Nero's reluctance to launch large-scale campaigns on the island soon after their accession. His sudden death in September 81 leaves us with few indications regarding his further plans for the province. The fact must be emphasized, though, that, once retreat had been decided on later in the 80s, the frontier of the province was probably reestablished just north of the line of the Solway – roughly where it had been located until the death of Vespasian and the accession of Titus (Jones 1992, 133).

Domitian's ascension in 81 ushered in the closing period of the Flavian dynasty. In various respects, brought to light elsewhere in this *Companion*, this moment proved to be a dividing line in the Flavian Age. As regards Britain, two major movements of Roman activity need to be highlighted: the alleged completion of the conquest of the island, and the retreat that followed hard upon it.

The third Flavian emperor has left ample evidence of his desire to establish his military renown upon accession. The glory of his father and brother could be invoked for propaganda needs: coins celebrating their conquest of Judea were minted once again for the purpose (Cody 2003). But Domitian clearly felt the need to establish his own military credentials, which called for real experience in the field. So much seems evident from his prompt attack on the Chatti in 83, and the (much derided) triumph he celebrated for it. Britain will have offered another promising source of martial glory. In light of Agricola's recent surge into Scotland, the emperor's choice to leave the governor in office may indicate, for once, aggressive intentions. Under these circumstances, it is likely that Agricola was finally given free hand in conquering "the remaining parts" of the island.

Two additional years, culminating in the battle of Mons Graupius, were required for Agricola to announce the island fully conquered, or at least for Tacitus to report it. The proclamation was obviously an overstatement, as the follow-up discloses: "Britain was thoroughly subdued and immediately abandoned" (*perdomita Britannia et statim omissa*, Tac. *Hist.* 1.2). This tells us more about the historian's aspirations than the actual Roman grasp of Caledonia in the mid-80s. Roman victory in battle had seen a large number of enemy troops flee to the hills, but it was not the number of surviving Caledonian warriors that decided the fate of the region (Tac. *Agr.* 36–7). It was, above all, a simple lack of commitment on Domitian's part to the preservation of the conquests in Scotland that resulted in a prompt withdrawal. The newly built legionary fortress at Inchtuthil was taken apart and all the northern forts and watchtowers on the Gask Frontier were abandoned.⁶

Despite the emperor's ardor for military recognition early during his reign, his later development into a frontier architect dictated safer, less aggressive policies, not necessarily popular among his generals (Jones 1992, 134). The same spirit that saw the creation of a new legion – *1 Minervia* – in the event of the campaign against the Chatti was not to be reproduced for the purpose of securing the hold of Scotland. The region, it would appear, rapidly dwindled in importance alongside the glory of its conqueror, Agricola, who disappeared from the public sphere soon after his return to Rome (Tac. *Agr.* 40–5; Cass. Dio 66.20.3). As soon as trouble emerged elsewhere in the empire, in the shape of Dacian invasions into Moesia in the mid-80s, it was Roman Britain that was called on to make a hefty contribution to the imperial effort – forfeiting a legion to the emperor's Dacian campaign, and seeing its frontier brought back nearly to the Solway. This was not

only the line recently secured by Cerialis, but the northern border of Roman influence as early as at the time of the alliance between Rome and the Brigantian Cartimandua – starting in the early 50s.

We know very little about the Roman administration of Britain between Agricola's retirement and Domitian's death in 96. The appointment in the mid-80s of a *iuuencus*, Javolenus Priscus, may be indicative of the demands presented by the temporarily subdued Scotland, or by the process of evacuating it. Suetonius supplies us with the name of a governor, Sallustius Lucullus, who may have been Agricola's immediate replacement (*Dom.* 10.2.3; Birley 2005, Gov. 12). Uncertainty regarding the precise identity of this individual has led to the emergence of a hypothesis – on the basis of two inscriptions of dubious origin (*RIB* 2333; *RIB* 90) – to the effect that Lucullus was the Roman-raised son of the British prince Adminius (Russell 2006). This theory is open to criticism on epigraphic grounds.⁷ But the picture portrayed here, of a stable province entering a mature stage of participation in the Roman imperial system, should at least afford it circumstantial viability.

NOTES

- 1 For settlement types around 150 BCE and ceramic style-zones around 100 BCE see Cunliffe (1987); for coinage zones see Haselgrove (1987). For a correlated picture see Millett (1990, 11–17).
- 2 See for example Griffin (2000) on Republican motifs in Flavian building projects; Cody (2003) on Augustan motifs in *Capita*-type coins; Gambash (2009a, 67–71) on Flavian dedications made *ex manubiis* (from the spoils of war).
- 3 For diagrams showing changing garrison patterns see Mattingly (2006, 133).
- 4 The Brigantes are generally thought to have come to terms with Claudius himself (Hartley and Fitts 1988). They were probably mentioned on Claudius' triumphal arch (*CIL* 6.920 = *ILS* 216; Barrett 1991). For Caratacus see Tac. *Ann.* 12.36.
- 5 The debate over Agricola's dates in Britain has shifted sides since Syme's (1958, 22) preference of the years 78–85 to the earlier possibility of 77–84, which is favored here (Birley 2005, 76–7).
- 6 For the numismatic evidence see Hobley (1989); for the archeology of the process see Woolliscroft and Hoffmann (2006, 175–90).
- 7 Hassall (2008, n. 26) reports that Anthony Birley has intimated his reservations in personal communication, though without specifying the grounds.

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FURTHER READING

Millett (1990) demonstrates well the importance of the material corpus for the reproduction of the historical narrative discussed here. He should be consulted alongside Cunliffe (2005) for Iron Age Britain and the Roman invasion of the island. Braund (1996) remains relevant for supplying the narrative up to Agricola's time. Above all, Birley (2005) depicts in fine detail the Roman governmental mechanism that ruled Britain; and Mattingly (2006) presents a comprehensive historical synthesis, including valuable thematic chapters on a variety of topics, from towns to the countryside, from religion to economy.

PART IV

Societies and Cultures

CHAPTER 15

Foreigners and Flavians: Prejudices and Engagements

Grant Parker

Quae tam seposita est, quae gens tam barbara, Caesar,
ex qua spectator non sit in urbe tua?

Mart. *Spect.* 3.1–2

What people is so far removed and so barbarous that there is no spectator
from it in your city, Caesar?

tr. Coleman

With this general proposition Martial begins the third poem of his collection of epigrams entitled *On Spectacles* (*De Spectaculis*). This work is usually dated to 80 CE, the year in which the Flavian Amphitheater was inaugurated, though evidence points variously to the reigns of both Titus and Domitian (Coleman 2006, lix–lxiv). The body of the poem lists a number of examples that contradict this initial proposition, so that by the end the reader has encountered an impressive array of far-flung spectators in attendance at the amphitheater:

venit ab Orpheo cultor Rhodopeius Haemo,
venit et epoto Sarmata pastus equo,
et qui prima bibit deprensi flumina Nili,
et quem supremae Tethyos unda ferit.
Festinavit Arabs, festinavere Sabaei,
et Cilices nimbis hic maduere suis.
Crinibus in nodum tortis venere Sugambri,
Atque aliter tortis crinibus Aethiopes.

Mart. *Spect.* 3.3–10

The farmer of Rhodope has come from Orphic Haemus, the Sarmatian has come, fed on draughts of horses' blood, and he who drinks the headwaters of the Nile, discovered at last, and he whom the wave of furthest Tethys pounds. The Arab has come hurrying, the Sabaei

have come hurrying, and here the Cilicians have been sprayed with their own mist. The Sugambri have come with their hair curled in a knot, and the Ethiopians with their hair curled in another way.

The peoples mentioned here are examples of barbarism, as is emphasized by the first line of the poem (*barbara*). In their specificity, they bring all corners of the world into view. Thus Thrace is represented, via metonymy, by two of its mountains, the Rhodope and the Haemus ranges. The nomadic Sarmatians from the Danube frontier were a matter of military concern throughout the Flavian period. The source of the Nile was a notorious puzzle for Greek and especially Roman science (Sen. *QNat.* 6.8.3; cf. Romm 1992, 149–56), so that its apparent discovery here is a particular cause for celebration. Given that Tethys was the wife of Oceanus, “he whom the wave of furthest Tethys pounds” (3.6) is probably a reference to the distant Britons. In another quick move to a distant corner of the greater Roman world, we see visitors from both the north and south of the Arabian peninsula, the Nabataeans from what is now Jordan as well as the “Sabaei” from Arabia Felix, today’s Yemen. (At this point the phrasing matches Virg. *Aen.* 8.706, where the design on Aeneas’ newly crafted shield depicts Rome’s historical destiny and also features several subordinate peoples.) Next are the Cilicians, associated with saffron, which infused water that was used to spray the stage. Moving north again, the Germanic Sugambri were well known for their hostility (for example, Caes. *BGall.* 4.16.2), so that in this instance their docile attendance at the amphitheater marks a new dispensation. Finally, the Ethiopians are also presented in terms of a distinctive feature, namely hair: in this context a physical characteristic both aligns them with the Sugambri and provides contrast. (On all these points and more, the detailed commentary by Coleman 2006, 37–53 is invaluable.)

Only the spectacle at the amphitheater could have brought together people from such distances, according to Martial. In the schema of the poem this is a snapshot geography, by which an aggregative effect is created by a profusion of vivid details. As such, it deserves comparison with other Flavian geographies, especially that of the elder Pliny in his *Natural History*, on which more later in this chapter. It is a feature of epigram, and particularly Martial’s, to engage creatively with scale, contrasting vastness with compression, and to juxtapose opposites. The compressed geography of the poem may be seen in this light (see further Rimell 2009).

The epigram ends with an aphorism (*sententia*) that contrasts and ultimately combines the audience’s linguistic diversity with the emperor’s unifying capacity:

Vox diversa sonat populorum, tum tamen una est,
cum verus patriae diceris esse pater.

Mart. *Spect.* 3.11–12

The speech of the peoples sounds different and yet, when you are hailed as the true father of the fatherland, they all then speak as one.

Like the preceding poems of the collection *On Spectacles*, this third poem ends by reaffirming the centrality of the emperor, who is after all the addressee of the poems. The title “father of the fatherland” (*pater patriae*) comes at the climax of the poem. In this

respect it matches one of the most famous of all Roman inscriptions, the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (*Achievements of the Deified Augustus*, section 35.4): this was the title Augustus took in 2 BCE. This was not just another meaningless honor for Augustus, but one with a wide range of resonances and implications (Cooley 2009, 273–5). The poem matches the *Res Gestae* also in another respect: public spectacles as a closing gesture, thus presented as the emperor’s crowning glory. The note of closure that this confers on the epigram is all the more pronounced, given that the three opening epigrams of the book form a unit of their own, strongly complementing each other (Coleman 2006, 37–53).

The diverse origin of the audience members is clearly central to this epigram. However, there is also a different sense of place that informs the collection as a whole, not least this poem. The amphitheater, now more commonly known by its medieval name as the Colosseum, was a central and highly visible piece of Flavian urban planning. Vespasian had initiated its construction, in accordance with Augustus’ wishes (Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1), but it was Titus who inaugurated it in 80 CE (Suet. *Tit.* 7.3; *CIL* 6.2059). Located on the site of Nero’s elaborate Golden House (*Domus Aurea*), and near a colossal bronze statue of that emperor, it occupied a prominent place: Martial pointedly comments that “what was previously the delight of a master is now the delight of the people” (*Spect.* 2.12; Coleman 2006, lxx–lxxii, 36).

If foreigners are the focal point of this essay, then Martial’s poem is also misleading: it suggests, in its choice of examples, that the markers of foreign identity are obvious, that visitors to Rome from far-flung places would have been easily recognizable as such. Here we may note that the senses of sight and sound come to the fore, in hairstyles and speech. Yet, beyond this, there are other senses in which foreignness remained much less clearly visible. For one thing, the city of Rome had long since been a major Mediterranean city, with a commensurately cosmopolitan population. Evidence from the city proper is not always easy to pinpoint diachronically, but in general it suggests we should more meaningfully see the Flavian metropolis within much larger swathes of Roman history. On the other hand, the upheaval of the year 69 CE clearly showed the power of the provinces and of the army to dictate politics at the highest level, not least the succession. By this reckoning the provinces and their population, the people on the outskirts of empire, constitute a major factor in the empire’s status.

More generally, an important question to address is the seemingly simple one: Were foreigners as important a part of the Flavian world as Martial’s epigram would suggest? In this chapter a number of topics will be addressed, most of them already glimpsed in Martial’s epigram: for example the panoptic effect of seeing the entire world, even if in glimpses, and the role of foreigners in triumphs and other public spectacles. As the subtitle of this chapter suggests, ancient prejudices, in so far as they are apparent in texts, should be seen in relation to practice, that is, the real-life structures and rules that can reveal their true importance (Parker 2008, 314).

1 Panoptic vision

We have already encountered earlier in this chapter Virgil’s famous description of the shield of Aeneas (*Aen.* 8.626–728) in the context of Arabs and Sabaeans, two of the foreign peoples there depicted. As a poetic representation of foreign peoples, the shield

of Aeneas may be considered Martial's great precedent. One study of the shield, focusing on cosmology, has influentially presented it as the ideological centerpiece of the entire poem (Hardie 1986, 336–76). For all its difference of genre, it has in common with Martial's poem the incorporation of various peoples into an integrated, overtly politically message. Like the shield of Achilles, Virgil's Homeric model (*Iliad* 18.478–608), the shield of Aeneas offers a microcosm of the world; Virgil's version adds an historical element that presents Rome's past as a kind of manifest destiny. This kind of panoptic effect has in the first instance a visual sense of large-scale description (*ecphrasis*); in its Roman form, and not least in the *Aeneid*, there is also a temporal one, contingent on a highly politicized version of history.

Despite the self-deprecating modesty with which the *Natural History* opens, something seen in many literary prefaces, Pliny nonetheless claims that he has perused 2000 volumes in composing the 36-book work that contains “twenty thousand notable facts” (pr. 17). These, says Pliny with a view to the scope of his enterprise, are more suitable to storehouses (*thesauros*) than books. Going beyond his sources, he has made many additions of his own:

Who would not suppose that when the world had been unified by the greatness of the Roman empire that life improved because of traffic of goods and the fellowship of a celebratory peace, and everything that had previously been hidden put forward for all to know?

Plin. *NH* 14.2

Augustus' right-hand man Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa created had a large-scale depiction of the Roman world publicly displayed in the metropolis. Was this what we would today call a map? Following lengthy debate it is today generally agreed that this involved some kind of visual representation of the earth, probably to accompany an inscription listing the very physical features depicted. It is perhaps no coincidence that most of our clues about this mysterious “Map of Agrippa” in fact come from Pliny's *Natural History* (Brodersen 1995, 268–87). For the Flavian-era encyclopedia was in a sense doing some of the same political work, in that both promise readers a view of the entire inhabited earth (*orbis terrarum*).

2 Emperors and triumphs

Martial's poem is addressed to the emperor (whether Titus or Domitian), and Pliny's *Natural History* is dedicated to the future emperor Titus. Indeed imperial dedicatees offer focal points for the kind of panoptic vision we have seen. What is more, Vespasian's accession had everything to do with his military successes and support from armies on the frontiers. He was in Egypt when, in December 69, the Senate declared him emperor upon the murder of Vitellius. Rather than coming directly to Rome, which would have been the obvious course of action, he remained until the next year (Levick 1999, 43–64).

A soldier emperor is thus central to the Flavian amphitheater and its inauguration, whatever the chronological difficulties around Martial's *On Spectacles*. The same can be said of the institution of the triumph, the celebration in the city of military victories. Romans considered this custom to be nearly as old as the city of Rome itself. A recent

study emphasizes the variations in the practice over time, revealing complications in the disparate ancient evidence and challenging received wisdom (Beard 2007).

The Jewish Revolt of 66–71 CE should technically not have qualified for a triumph because it was an uprising of an already subject people, in other words closer to civil war than foreign conquest. But this detail was clearly glossed over. In any case, the monument celebrating this victory, the Arch of Titus on the Velian Hill adjoining the Forum Romanum, is today a major ancient landmark of the city, and in fact a rare survival in its upright form (see Fig. 27.4). The relief panels inside the Arch depict the triumph celebrated by Titus and Vespasian. On the north side Titus himself appears as *triumphator*, conveyed on a four-horse-drawn chariot; he is crowned with a laurel wreath by Winged Victory (see Fig. 6.1). The south panel depicts the carrying of sacred objects looted from the Temple at Jerusalem, including the Table of Shewbread, golden trumpets and especially the Menorah, the seven-lamped golden candlestick (see Fig. 6.2). According to Jewish tradition, among the countless artifacts looted from the Temple at Jerusalem for Roman imperial consumption were its curtain and Solomon's throne (Purcell 2000, 406, with references). Significantly for current purposes, the panels do not depict the conquered people themselves, even though those would have been part of the triumphal procession. It is hard to know why this should be so: could it be because this triumph involved a previously subject people? Given that the Arch of Titus is perhaps the most important ancient representation of a triumph, this apparent absence of foreigners is as striking as it is puzzling.

The established, ritualistic nature of the triumph allowed for some surprising variations (generally emphasized by Beard 2007). Domitian was without peer in this regard, or so it appears even if we take into account the negative bias of the sources. Apparently he was not above staging a phony triumph, to laughable effect (Tac. *Agr.* 39.1; cf. Plin. *Pan.* 16.3; Cass. Dio 67.4.1). Tacitus here seeks to contrast Domitian's *virtus* with that of his father-in-law, Agricola, who had enjoyed such success in Britain. It was Domitian also who staged a bizarre and hair-raising funeral banquet in 89 CE, complete with carefully stage-managed reminders of the diners' own mortality, as part of celebrations of his triumph over the Germans and Dacians (Cass. Dio 67.9, with Beard 2007, 257–8). Whatever the underlying course of events here, the element of transgression is again played up in this account of Domitian's reign.

Another noteworthy Flavian variation on the triumphal theme is found at the end of Silius Italicus' epic poem, the *Punica*. The closing gesture for the poem is the triumph of Scipio Aemilianus (17.625–54). Not surprisingly, this is where the presence of Domitian has been suspected as a tacit point of reference:

Hanno walked there, with noble youths of Carthage; also the chief men of the Macedonians, with black-skinned Moors and Numidians, and the Garamantes whom the god Ammon sees as they scour the desert, and people of the Syrtis that wrecks so many ships.

Pun. 17.631–4

Then Carthage was seen in the procession, stretching out her conquered hands to heaven; and other figures also – Spain now pacified, Gades at the World's End, Calpe the limit of the achievements of Hercules in ancient times, and the Baetis that is wont to bathe the sun's coursers in its sweet waters.

Pun. 17.635–39

Not unlike Martial's epigram, a high degree of geographic specificity is apparent in the Silius passage. Indeed, triumph offers a strong closural effect for the epic as a whole (Tipping 2010, 214).

3 Cosmopolis

The world of Martial's Rome presents many foreigners, and our epigram focuses on those coming to observe a public spectacle. Indeed, we know from Campanian inscriptions that it was customary for people to visit neighboring towns in order to see their public spectacles (Coleman 2006, 38). There is certainly ancient evidence for what we might call tourism, linked not only to spectacles but to a great variety of religious festivals and sacred places (André and Baslez 1993, 157–88). In this respect Martial elevates the widespread, smaller scale of movement to a more grandiose level, magnifying the distances involved.

Yet there are other senses of foreign presence in the city that require consideration, and those senses do not necessarily involve the voluntary movement of tourists. For one thing, it is necessary to take stock of the ethnic variety within the city of Rome, to the extent that this is possible. To take a notable example, in the *Consolation to Helvia* Seneca rehearses the various motives that might have brought foreigners to the city (*Helv.* 6.2–3). Here, the many “pull” factors include political ambition, public office, diplomacy, education, public spectacles and the high life. These attract people to the city and continually generate its metropolitan character. Seneca, writing in this work about exile, mentions these people in order to regret their loss of their place of origin. Even more familiar and more negative in tone is Juvenal's *Satire* 3, which is hard to date precisely but evidently comes from either Domitian's reign or shortly thereafter. In that poem the speaker, one Umbricius, gives vent to his displeasure at the influx of foreigners, one of many factors that cause his discomfort in Rome and drive him to depart in favor of the small town of Cumae on the Bay of Naples. His gripe is particularly with Greeks, who are so versatile and unscrupulous they will try their hand at anything, but also with Syrians in the city of Rome:

My fellow-citizens, I cannot stand a Greekified Rome. Yet how few of our dregs are Achaeans [i.e. Greeks]? The Syrian Orontes has for a long time now been polluting the Tiber, bringing with it its language and customs, its slanting strings along with pipers, its native tom-toms too, and the girls who are told to offer themselves for sale at the Circus.

Juv. *Sat.* 3.60–65, tr. Braund

With the river Orontes, the city of Antioch is denoted by metonymy, though the two rivers together also function as a twofold metaphor for cross-cultural contact. Foreigners are edging Romans out, none more so than the Greeks (3.58–125). The mention of rivers may be no coincidence, given that rivers were frequently paraded in triumphal processions, in the form of artistic representations or simulacra (Beard 2007, 109). The Orontes, in particular, is said to have brought with it low-class street entertainments, including prostitution. For the disapproving Umbricius these foreigners are a “push” factor, contributing to the menaces of city life and ultimately precipitating his departure

(Edwards 1996, 127–8). Martial, by contrast, does not inveigh against foreigners in anything like the same way.

In the most substantial study of foreigners in the city of Rome, the working definition speaks volumes: “someone who was born outside Italy and moved to Rome, but continued to have a ‘home’ (in their own thinking or in other people’s) elsewhere” (Noy 2000, xi). On the one hand it is eminently sensible to combine physical and affective elements of presence. On the other, the nature of the evidence, with so many of the inscriptions being merely names, underlines the tenuousness of any such definition. Nonetheless, given the usefulness of the resulting dossier, it would be peevish to point out that such conclusions involve the entire lives of people, whereas we might reasonably expect identities and allegiances to change with time and circumstance. Inscriptions such as these can be no more than a point of departure for identifying foreigners and understanding their experiences in the city. For all their limitations as evidence for human identities, inscriptions are qualitatively different to literary texts about foreigners, and point in the direction of lived experience rather than stereotypes. Such a distinction should not be taken to mean that stereotypes have *no* experiential dimension. On the contrary, it acts as a sobering reminder of the limitations of ethnic stereotypes in writing broader social history.

Against this backdrop it is necessary to gain greater specificity by focusing on the life-stories of individuals that are available to us. In the process it is also necessary to broaden the purview beyond the city of Rome.

4 Josephus

One individual whose path we are able to trace in great detail is someone who stemmed from a non-Roman elite but who, in the course of war, changed allegiance and joined the Roman side. Josephus was not only a prolific writer on the history of the Jews but he is also unprecedented as author of a detailed autobiography, the *Vita* or *Life of Josephus* that is appended to his *Jewish Antiquities*. The concluding section of the autobiography (*Vit.* 76) is explicit in recounting the favors received first from Vespasian and then his sons. The opening of the *Jewish War* presents the author as an ethnic Jew and native speaker of Aramaic, so that the existing Greek text is a translation intended to win a broad readership on the eastern half of the empire:

In these circumstances I, Josephus, son of Matthias, an ethnic Jew, a native of Jerusalem and a priest, who at the opening of the war myself fought against the Roman and afterwards was perforce an onlooker, propose to provide the subjects of the Roman Empire with a narrative of the facts, by translating into Greek the account which I previously composed in my vernacular tongue [Aramaic] and sent to the non-Greek speakers of the interior.

Joseph. *BJ* 1 pr. 3

The reference to “non-Greek speakers of the interior” is telling, and in fact not easily translated: literally “inland barbarians” (τοῖς ἄνω βαρβάροις). The word “barbarian” is used here, not apparently in a pejorative way, but focusing on language. In fact the earliest occurrences of the word in Greek are in the compound form to mean “foreign-speaking” (Hom. *Il.* 2.867; cf. Strab. 14.2.28). In many instances, including this one, it may be

debated if a negative connotation can be detected. When Josephus writes of translating for Greek-speaking readers, he appears to include even his own Jewish people (Rajak 2001, 275).

I thought it monstrous, therefore, to allow the truth in affairs at such a moment to go astray, and that, while Parthians and Babylonians and the most remote tribes of Arabia with our countrymen beyond the Euphrates and the inhabitants of Adiabene [i.e. upper Tigris] were, through my assiduity, accurately acquainted with the origin of the war, the various phases of calamity through which it passed and its conclusion, the Greeks and such Romans as were not engaged in the contest should remain in ignorance of these matters, with flattering or fictitious narratives as their only guide.

Joseph. *BJ* 1 pr. 6

Josephus pointedly makes a contrast between eastern peoples at and beyond Rome's eastern frontier with those within the empire proper. Language is the decisive difference here, given his need to translate from Aramaic into Greek. Behind Josephus' ostensible wish to inform "Greeks and Romans" who were not involved in the conflict is also a highly charged imperative of self-justification for his change of allegiance to the Roman side.

5 Berenice and Veleda

Two other foreign leaders, both women, require attention alongside Josephus, since they suggest a wide range of statuses in relation to the Roman state. The life of the Jewish princess Berenice (born 28 CE) makes for a vivid story in itself. The daughter of Julius Agrippa I and great-granddaughter of Herod the Great, she was part of a series of dynastic marriages. Her royal status is evident at Luke–Acts 25, as one of the royals with whom the apostle Paul had an audience, and she appears to have tried to stop the Jewish Revolt from occurring. During Titus' Judean sojourn in 67–70 CE she had an affair with him and later followed him to Rome. However, when Titus became emperor in 79 he dismissed her – unwillingly on both his and her part; soon afterward she returned to Rome, only to be sent away again (on this relationship see also CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 3). The main source focuses on Titus' hedonistic reputation and his attempts to redress it once in power (Suet. *Tit.* 7.1–2), whereas Cassius Dio emphasizes his responsiveness to senatorial and popular unease on this matter (66.15.4). By contrast, Josephus alludes to her power and wealth (*BJ* 2.312, 426), but not to the relationship, perhaps because of lingering embarrassment. From Berenice's life-story it is worth emphasizing her Roman sympathy from the start, which is a product of the long-term ties between the Hasmonean royal family and Rome. As in the case of Cleopatra more than a century early, she is a foreign leader who is romantically connected to Roman power; in both cases, that romance is a source of scandal.

For the second case to consider here, Veleda, we move from Judaea to the Germanic world. In 69 CE, the Batavian prince Julius Civilis, who had gained Roman citizenship but later became antagonized by Nero, led the Batavi in revolt. Veleda spurred on her own tribe, the Bructeri, to join the revolt. After some early successes, involving both Roman allies and unconquered Gallic peoples, the Batavian revolt was quashed under

the Roman commander Petillius Cerialis. Though the Bructeri suffered defeat, Veleda continued to incite resistance and consequently became a target of Roman operations. According to Tacitus, Cerialis made overtures to Veleda on the same footing as Civilis himself (*Hist.* 5.24). It was Veleda who had received a captured legionary commander, Munius Lupercus, together with loot; and it is to her that a Roman flagship was sent up the river Lippe as tribute after it had been seized (*Hist.* 4.61 and 5.22). The Germans long regarded Veleda as a divinity (*Germ.* 8). In the years following, 75–78 CE, Rutilius Gallicus, governor of Lower Germany, launched a series of successful campaigns against the Bructeri, and eventually Veleda was captured. It is her capture that Statius mentions in passing in a poem celebrating Rutilius' career:

Time lacks to set forth the armies of the north and rebel Rhine, the prayers of the captive Veleda, and, greatest and latest glory, Rome placed in your charge as the Dacians were perishing, when you, Gallicus, were chosen to take the reins from so great a ruler [sc. Domitian], to Fortune no surprise.

Stat. *Silv.* 1.4.89–93

Military honors are shared, in this account, by Rutilius and the future emperor Domitian, who participated in the campaign, and Veleda provides subsidiary, passing detail. (It appears that the poem was written in 89 CE, looking back 10 years to the reign of Vespasian and also to Domitian's own military career prior to accession.)

Tantalizing new information about Veleda came to light with a fragmentary Greek inscription that was first published in 1947. The text appears to be part of a satire, in which someone, perhaps Vespasian himself, asks the oracle "what should be done concerning the tall maiden ... whom the Rhine-dwellers worship, shuddering at the thunderings of her golden voice" (*L'Année épigraphique* 1953.25). From the context of the inscription she appears to have become a temple servant at Ardea, near Rome. If this scenario is correct, it suggests that a foreign leader could, following defeat and capture, find a home within the empire. It suggests, moreover, that her religious role as a prophetess among the Bructeri continued to inform her status once in Italy. This is a particularly intriguing point, offering more questions than answers. Like Josephus, Veleda is a foreign leader who is first at war with Rome and then incorporated into the empire. Unlike Berenice, her Italian sojourn was not apparently terminated by force. If we compare the three, it would appear that Josephus' integration into the Roman establishment came from his acceptance of a subordinate status, whereas Berenice was expelled because of her ongoing eminence via her liaison with Titus and the difficulties that generated. In the case of Veleda, least clear of the three, priestly status seems to have accompanied her from the Germanic frontier to Italy, and with it a special, limited kind of preeminence.

6 The human landscape of Statius' *Silvae*

From Josephus, Berenice, and Veleda we move to two individuals who, as subjects of Statius' occasional poetry, offer object lessons in cultural identity within the Flavian world, and in particular the phenomenon of acculturation. The first is Glaucias, favorite

boy (*puer delicatus*) of Statius' wealthy patron, Atedius Melior. Glaucias' Greek name is itself a mark of non-Italian, slave origins: he was apparently freed some time after his birth (Mart. *Ep.* 6.28.1). *Silvae* 2.1 is a lament (*epicedion*) upon his death, addressed to his master. Melior's grief is understandable, says Statius, given that he was a home-born slave or *verna* rather than heartlessly purchased:

Non te barbaricae versabat turbo catastae,
nec mixtus Phariis venalis mercibus infans
compositosque sales meditataque verba locutus
quaesisti lascivus erum tardeque parasti.

Stat. *Silv.* 2.1.72–5)

You were not turned round on some foreigner's revolving platform, you were no infant for sale among Pharian [Egyptian] merchandise, retailing manufactured jests and words prepared, frolicking in quest of a master and slow to find one.

Glaucias' nature is contrasted with that of Egyptian slaves, who generally had a reputation for garrulity and insolence (Van Dam 1984, 111). The contrast is heightened by the pointedly dismissive reference to the slaves as chattel, subject to commercial value (*mercibus*, with Newlands 2011, 85). A high proportion of slaves in Rome were obtained in distant markets or were of foreign descent, but in the poem Statius provides no hint of Glaucias' racial identity beyond what can be inferred from his name. Indeed, against such a background Statius chooses to downplay any possible foreignness. In the very next lines, we learn, Glaucias' birth is naturalized within his master's household by the manumission of his parents:

Here your house, hence your origin. Both your parents have long been dear to your master's home and were freed to make you happy, lest you should complain of your birth.

Stat. *Silv.* 2.1.76–8

Glaucias' untimely demise is also the subject of two epigrams of Martial, 6.28 and 6.29. Those poems are very short compared to Statius', ten and eight lines as opposed to 234. Martial uses explicit terms to characterize the relative status of Glaucias and Melior (*libertus* for "freedman" at 6.28.1 and 6.29.4; *patroni* at 6.28.3 and 6.29.3; and *domini* at 6.29.2, both the latter meaning "master"). By contrast, Statius minimizes the status difference between a slaveholding master and his beloved freedman, instead emphasizing the affection between them. Statius does this by presenting the relationship as one between father and son, and generally returning to the theme of intrafamilial proximity. Despite his humble, foreign origins Glaucias shares the ethical values of the Roman elite (Bernstein 2005, 269). As Statius explicitly claims, adoption is no less powerful than blood in determining character: "proximity of blood is not the sole bond" (*non omnia sanguis proximus ... alligat*, 2.1.84–6).

Another of the *Silvae* also offers an object lesson in the phenomenon of acculturation. Poem 4.5 was dedicated to Septimius Severus, who came from the major Libyan city of Lepcis Magna. That was also the origin of L. Septimius Severus, grandfather of the subsequent emperor, and possibly a cousin of the dedicatee.

Did Lepcis, remote in the distant Syrtes, give you birth? Soon she will be bearing Indian harvests and forestall the perfumed Sabaeans with rare cinnamon. Who but would think that sweet Septimius had crawled on every hill of Romulus? Who deny that, having left the breast, he drank from Juturna's fountain?

Stat. *Silv.* 4.5.29–36

The foreignness of Lepcis is apparent in its association with exotic commodities. These constituted an important way by which Romans would make sense of distant lands (Parker 2007). Here the point is to heighten the cultural distance between North Africa and Rome, only to reveal Septimius' Romanness. As in the case of Glaucias, the emphasis is on the earliest period of youth.

It is no wonder that you excel (*nec mira virtus*). Straightway, knowing nothing of Africa's shallows, you entered an Ausonian [Italian] harbor and, child of adoption, swam in Tuscan waters. Then in boyhood you grew up among sons of the Senate House ... by nature a patrician seeking unmeasured toils.

Stat. *Silv.* 4.5.37–44

If we can steer clear of a textual difficulty in these lines, it is nonetheless clear that Septimius is congratulated on "passing for Roman," to adapt contemporary American racial discourse. In lines that seem remarkably explicit, Statius is congratulating Septimius on having achieved a kind of upward mobility that belies his ethnic origins. Racial identity may usefully be considered as performance, in the enriched sense of that word (see esp. McCoskey 2012).

Your speech was not Punic, nor foreign your dress or your mind: Italian, Italian! In the City and Rome's squadrons there are some worthy to be fosterlings of Libya.

Stat. *Silv.* 4.5.45–8

While there is disagreement among scholars on the interpretation on this stanza, it does appear that Statius is pushing the argument about Septimius even further: just as Septimius is, by dint of his inner qualities, easily worthy of Rome, so some Romans would be better suited to Libya. If this reading is correct, the tone is unusually harsh for the *Silvae*, where the element of praise predominates.

Taken together, these two characters in the world of the *Silvae* offer evidence for the integrative capacity of Roman imperial society, and of the phenomenon of upward mobility. In such settings, ethnic difference is positively played down – by denial or silence – by focusing on the qualities of exceptional individuals. At this point we shall back up a little, to sketch just what kind of expectations and stereotypes made possible such exceptions.

7 An ethnographic tradition

"Britain's position and its peoples have been described by many writers." Tacitus could write this in full confidence that an ethnographic tradition would be familiar to his readers (*Agr.* 10.1), yet even that text contains a brief ethnographic excursus by way of setting the scene for the military career of his father-in-law, Cn. Julius Agricola (40–93 CE),

sometime governor of Britain. Agricola's career came to an end in 85 CE, when he was recalled from Britain. He had been elevated under Vespasian but apparently forced into retirement under Domitian. The work appears to have been published in 98 CE, the same year as another work that constitutes the only surviving ancient work devoted entirely to ethnography, the *Germania*. Tacitus' concerns in these works, presented at the start and end, hint at utopianism: the idea that the distant locations of Britain and Germany pointed to the moral shortcomings of Rome. In the *Germania* this is suggested by the emphasis on the *libertas* of the Germans. Indeed, *libertas* is a major and complex theme in Tacitus' writings, so that its occurrence in an ethnographic context is well worth consideration.

In its brevity, the excursus of *Agricola* (sections 10–12) provides a good summary of the ethnographic tradition, revealing the persistence of particular themes, all the more clearly by virtue of its abbreviated form. Tacitus starts with physical geography before moving to physical features of the inhabitants; then cultural elements including religion, language and, with some emphasis, military prowess; finally climate, crops, and commodities. It is clear that the agenda reveals the military context of Roman engagement with the island and its peoples. At the same time moral qualities are not far from Tacitus' purview: compared with the Gauls, "the Britons have more spirit, being a people whom long peace has not yet enervated" (10.5). The Gauls for their part had once been militarily strong, but eventually "sloth following on ease crept over them, and they lost their courage along with their freedom" (also 10.5). Recent scholarship on Germanic peoples has shown connections between Caesar, Seneca and Tacitus, thus spanning periods before and after the Flavians (Krebs 2011).

To focus on the Flavian period itself, the Latin epic abounds with examples. Now it is true that an ethnographic tradition is part of Latin poetic discourse, with Augustan verse particularly rich in this respect (Thomas 1982). While several instances can be found in Flavian verse, the more difficult task will be to assess such examples in relation to their times. The Thracians, the people who are first to be mentioned in Martial's epigram, were well known for their ferocity. This characteristic emerges from the following passage from Statius' epic *Thebaid*:

... even as the Bistonians [sc. Thracians] in wild concourse hold their revels upon Rhodope or in the depths of Ossa's vales. For them one of the flock snatched half-alive from the lion's jaw is a feast, and to abate their fury with new milk is a luxury; but when the fierce fragrance of Ogygian Iacchus [i.e. Bacchus] breaths upon them, then how glorious to fling stones and goblets, and the shedding of guiltless comrades' blood to begin the day anew and appoint once more the festal banquet.

Stat. *Theb.* 2.81–8

So uncivilized are the Thracians that they compete with animals for food. The eating of flesh and the drinking of milk were considered emblematic of barbarity, particularly in relation to pastoral nomads (Shaw 1982–3). More broadly speaking, eating was a key marker of ancient civility, as is seen in a famous graffito from Pompeii: 'The person with whom I do not dine is a barbarian to me' (*CIL* 4.1880, cf. Gowers 1993, 26). In this inscription there is a negative overtone to the word *barbarus*. In the *Thebaid* passage, the reference to Bacchus ("Ogygian Iacchus") further suggests that the Thracians were a

threat to the social order. In the case of Statius, such animalistic habits of consumption form a tacit contrast with villa culture on the Bay of Naples, where dinner parties (*cenae*) were a key element of elite civility and tended to embrace the ideal of social equality, in theory at any rate (D'Arms 1970). In the world of Statius' *Silvae* dinner parties play an important role: two examples are *Silvae* 2.2 4.6, addressed to Novius Vindex, who is celebrated not only as patron of the arts but also as host.

To take another example from Flavian epic, Valerius Flaccus' dedication to Vespasian makes a pointed reference to foreigners:

And you too, who have yet greater fame for opening the sea, after the Caledonian Ocean, which had previously spurned the Phrygian Julii, bore your sails – raise me up from the nations and the cloud-bearing earth (for you can do so), and look favorably upon me, venerable one, as I sing the deeds of old-time heroes. Your own son, holy father, sings of Idume overthrown, of his brother, black with the dust of Solyma, scattering torches and raging against every tower.

Val. Fl. *Arg.* 1.7–14. tr. Zissos

The reference here is to Titus' conquest of Jerusalem. Valerius compares Vespasian with the Julio-Claudians, to the detriment of the latter. The emperor and his sons are the focus of this triumphal geography, which sets the scene for the mythical geography of the poem as a whole. Whereas the poem draws in part on Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, and thus goes back to a very long tradition of Greek literature, this is a direct index of Valerius' own times.

8 The question of race

By what rubric might we define foreignness? In ancient studies, cultural difference has long been recognized, given that it links explicitly with the ethnographic tradition in literary texts going back to Herodotus in the fifth century BCE. Scholarship has generally examined this under the rubric of ethnicity (for a recent example, see Gruen 2011). Much more problematic is the matter of race, which clearly overlaps conceptually, yet has perhaps suffered the potential awkwardness of a conceptual link with racism (McCoskey 2011). One feature that potentially distinguishes race as a heuristic category from ethnicity is the focus on somatic features; another is the explanation of those features (and indeed of cultural difference as well) in terms of climate. This phenomenon is called environmental determinism and is articulated in the Hippocratic treatise, *Airs Waters Places*, contemporary with Herodotus and seemingly originating in the same intellectual milieu. A Flavian-period instance of the idea can be found in Pliny's *Natural History*, in the context of a generalized description of the earth, its movements and features.

For it is beyond question that the Ethiopians are burnt by the heat of the heavenly body [sc. the sun] near them, and are born with scorched appearance, with curly beard and hair, and that in the opposite region of the world the races have white frosty skins, with yellow hair that hangs straight; while the latter are fierce owing to the rigidity of their climate but the former wise because of the mobility of theirs.

Plin. *NH* 2.189

... whereas in the middle of the earth, owing to a healthy blending of both elements, there are tracts that are fertile for all sorts of produce, and men are of medium bodily stature, with a marked blending even in the matter of complexion; customs are gentle, senses clear, intellects fertile and able to grasp the whole of nature; and they also have governments, which the outer races never have possessed, any more than they have ever been subject to the central races, being quite detached and solitary on account of the savagery of the nature that broods over those regions.

Plin. *NH* 2.190

The term race may be appropriate here, given that it links physical features with human behavior. It is consistent with the Hippocratic idea of environmental determinism, which would much later be influential, for example in Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). Seen in this span of time, there is considerable durability in the racial discourse of environmental determinism, and Pliny's comments quoted above may be considered evidence of its continuity and adaptability across different historical periods (see further Isaac 2004, 56–109).

9 Those Greeks

Greeks would not have been exotic enough to merit mention in Martial's epigram, yet they are central to any Roman notion of otherness. Pliny the Elder, in his discussion of medicine, provides direct evidence for the Elder Cato's notorious dislike of contemporary Greeks (*NH* 29.13–4). According to Pliny, the elder Cato had told his son that Greeks conspired to murder all Romans with their medicine, adding insult to injury by charging fees for their services. Cato's indignation had other elements as well: "They are also always dubbing us barbarians, and to fling more filth on us than on others they give us the foul nickname of Opici." On these grounds Cato forbids his son to have any dealings with doctors. Now it is true that there is plenty of evidence for Cato's anti-Hellenic position, in relation to both medicine and philosophy (for example, Plutarch: see further Isaac 2004, 226–7, 385–6). Of significance here is the change in Roman attitudes over time: such a sentiment in Cato's own time reflected the need of Romans to establish their own cultural identity in a Mediterranean context. This need is reflected in the first Latin uses of the term *barbarus*, where the term denotes Romans, as seen from a Greek perspective (for example Plaut. *Mil.* 211). In fact, Latin New Comedy is a genre very close to the Greek, and this needs to be considered in any analysis of Plautus. In the more than two centuries that separated the Flavians from Plautus and Cato the Elder, Rome obtained and consolidated control over the entire Mediterranean basin. Pliny's passage can therefore be read in two opposite ways, both of them carrying some weight: as the ongoing presence of older prejudice within deep cultural memory, and as a reminder of the changes separating the two historical periods.

10 Mediterranean bearings

Of the peoples mentioned by Martial in *Spect.* 3, only one was located on the Mediterranean proper: the Cilicians of the southern coast of Anatolia, opposite the island of Cyprus. Cilicia was made a Roman province in 102 BCE for the purpose of combating

piracy, and played a major role in Pompey's victory over the pirates in 67 BCE. In 72 CE it was Vespasian who re-established the province, with Tarsus the capital. Of the others, Nabataea, based around Petra in today's state of Jordan, is closest, whereas the territory of the Iranian-speaking Sarmatians adjoined the Black Sea. The others lived at even greater distances from the Roman metropolis, which is the point of the poem, and indeed from the Mediterranean base itself. Nonetheless, it remains axiomatic that the Roman empire was centered on the Mediterranean, and relied to a considerable degree on water-borne conveyance and communication. A crucial point in the establishment of Roman power was the twofold conquest of 146 BCE: of Carthage under Scipio Aemilianus and of Greece under Lucius Mummius. It would be fair to say that by the middle of the second century BCE Rome held sway over the entire Mediterranean.

The matter of Mediterranean history, indeed histories and identities, has been on the classical agenda in recent decades, a response to the impetus provided by Fernand Braudel's paradigm-shifting work. Braudel's magnum opus, *La Méditerranée*, was first published in the middle of the twentieth century but took a long time to make an impact on Anglophone scholarship, and certainly on classical studies (Horden and Purcell 2000). In the more recent, jointly written work, *The Corrupting Sea*, connectivity is a crucial part of Mediterranean history; just as important is ecology, in terms of which the fragmented landscape and coastlines both necessitate and facilitate connectivity. While it is not possible to do justice here to such a richly textured work and the debate it has stirred up (for example, Harris 2005), it is still necessary to insist on a Mediterranean setting for Rome's power.

What purchase, more specifically, might a Mediterranean approach have for the Flavian period? Given the capacious timeframe of Horden and Purcell's book, spanning roughly 3000 years from around 1500 BCE, the question contains a hint of absurdity. It would be lean pickings to say that the Flavian period, which lasted 27 years, reflected larger trends. Yet that is the impression that emerges in these comments, suggesting that some particular bits of evidence deserve to be savored for the sharpness with which they illustrate larger patterns.

Religion is one criterion by which to understand not only mobility but also Roman receptiveness to foreign elements. While several diaspora cults flourished in the Flavian period, including those of Cybele and Christ, it was the Isis cult that received support from all the three Flavian emperors (Jones 1992, 101 with references). Its broad presence in Flavian Italy (and elsewhere) has been taken as evidence of the integrated nature of the empire. Domitian strongly supported the cult by founding numerous sanctuaries for the goddess, and contributing to the Iseum Campense in the city. The Iseum Campense is where Titus spent the night preceding his famous triumph (Joseph. *BJ* 7.123–4). In a broader sense the cult of Isis reveals a high degree of pan-Mediterranean diffusion back to fourth-century BCE Attica, closely allied with trade patterns; by the early first century BCE the cult was well established in port cities such as Ostia and Pompeii. In the late Republic and the Empire the degree of state support varied widely, with the Flavians standing out in their observance and promotion of the Isis cult.

The Mediterranean is thus a useful heuristic tool with which to think about the forces of integration and distancing in Roman culture. In particular, a Mediterranean perspective makes it easier to highlight the element of mobility, and in the case of the Isis cult it suggests economic unity that had religious consequences. Nonetheless it does not appear that the Mediterranean can account for all the features presented in this chapter.

Conclusion: othering versus integration

To conclude, we might take stock of just how important the question of foreigners should be in an assessment of the Flavian period. The evidence is mixed. On the one hand, a look through Suetonius' *Lives of Vespasian, Titus and Domitian* bears little fruit in this regard, beyond references to diplomacy and warfare; the same could be said of a dossier of inscriptions from the period (McCrum and Woodhead 1961). However, such benchmarks are too superficial to be helpful on their own. It is surely more significant that two major surviving Flavian monuments in Rome, the Amphitheater and the Arch of Titus, were involved in the Rome-bound influx of people from different parts of the Mediterranean world – albeit in different ways, and with different degrees of freedom on the part of those making the journey. While those were exceptional buildings, they say much about the relationship of the metropolis to its empire, and the role of foreigners in negotiating that relationship. They are a reminder that the role of foreigners should be sought not merely in abstract thought, expressed in literary texts, but also in relation to social practices, what I have called “engagements” in the subtitle of this chapter. By this reckoning, attendance at the amphitheater or at the triumph Titus shared with his father, or for that matter participation in either of those spectacles, should play a role in any assessment of foreigners in the Flavian period. By the same token, it is necessary to take stock of the geographical origins of the emerging Flavian aristocracy (Mellor 2003), with Gaul and Spain gaining prominence that would soon reach the office of emperor by the time of Trajan – to say nothing of the broadening of citizenship that led eventually to the Edict of Antoninus in 212 CE (Shaw 2000; Richter 2011).

It is useful to return to Pliny. In his survey of the entire *orbis terrarum* spanning Books 3 to 7, he says he is faced with a problem when coming to Italy. The context of his work requires greater brevity on Italy and its peoples than he is inclined to give, and he feels constrained to the degree that he needs to apologize to his readers:

I am well aware that I may with justice be considered ungrateful and lazy if I describe in this casual and cursory manner a land which is at once the nursling and the mother of all other lands, chosen by the providence of the gods to make heaven itself more glorious, to unite scattered empires, to make manners gentle, to draw together in converse by community of language the jarring and uncouth tongues of so many nations, to give mankind civilization, and in a word to become throughout the world the single fatherland of all the races.

Plin. *NH* 3.39 tr. Rackham

This passage, marked by highly wrought language, contains a definition of civilization (*humanitas*). Pliny deploys the language of family relations; and, as we have seen, the term *patria* was highly charged politically and socially (Ando 2000, esp. 1–18; cf. Richter 2011). On this view Italy is central, so that it matches the status of Greece in the Hippocratic *Airs Waters Places*. Shortly afterward Pliny alludes to a Greek perspective with reference to the term Magna Graecia (literally “Great Greece”), applied to the part of southern Italy that had been colonized by the Greeks.

It is surely no coincidence that the two most prolific writers of the Flavian period were both deeply involved in the question of otherness, albeit in different ways. Flavius Josephus made the transition from the fringes of the empire to the inner circle of power,

an enemy of Rome who changed sides and benefited from proximity to his former adversaries. It should be emphasized that his writings reflect his metropolitan sojourn and imperial patronage no less than they do his Jewish origins. His topics, his choice of language, and his use of autobiography all suggest that he used writing to negotiate cultural identities. In his case Judaism had a long and proud tradition of its own, from long before Roman presence in the eastern Mediterranean, and Josephus for one experienced the encounter between Judaism and Rome as countervailing social and even military forces. His writings are precious evidence for the nature of those forces. The Jews often receive special status in studies such as this, in part because Jewish perspectives are available to us through the writings of Josephus and others. The elder Pliny's perspective on Roman power is an obvious contrast, as an Italian-born equestrian from a prosperous background. When he writes of foreign peoples in the early books of his *Natural History* it is within a context of Nature (*Natura*) that spans the entire inhabited world (*orbis terrarum*), ruled by Roman arms and with Italy at the center. Whereas Josephus focuses on his own ethnic group (*ethnos*), with a strong sense of self-justification, Pliny can write from within the heart of the Roman state, with a comfortable sense that the various groups (*gentes*) surveyed in his account all contribute to a many-splendored mosaic. It is no accident, then, that the future emperor Titus is the addressee of the *Natural History*. The notion of the barbarian was triggered by specific occasions: public spectacle, warfare, and imperial self-presentation. Pliny's encyclopedic project might seem as if it is of a different order, yet as we have seen it has links with all these elements.

Josephus may be a special case for the consideration of non-Romans in this chapter, offering a sobering reminder of the complexities involved. On the one hand, a metropolitan perspective emerges naturally from our sources. On the other hand, there is great variety in such sources: Martial, celebrating the Flavian Amphitheater, comes from Spain to Rome as a young man and returns there at the end of his career around 102 CE (*Ep.* 12. pr.). That return is itself telling, in that he seems to have become quickly disenchanted by the provincial mindset of his Spanish audience, as opposed to his previous Roman one. Does this Spanish location mark Martial out as a barbarian? No, rather it suggests that the discourse around barbarian identity that had been central, say, to Caesar's *Gallie Wars* or Cicero's speeches (where it is deployed against political opponents) had effectively become a discourse about center and periphery by the Flavian period. Josephus offers another cautionary tale: as someone who started out in the priestly aristocracy, initially a leader in the Jewish revolt, and did his writing from within a Roman context. Based at Rome, and using the Greek language, his very use of the terminology of foreignness (*βάρβαρος*), when viewed in relation to his own life-story, suggests the extent to which social identities were open to negotiation. In the end the concept of foreignness is indeed useful – for the Flavian period no less than for others – insofar as it allows us to see the countervailing forces of othering and of integration.

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FURTHER READING

Isaac (2004) is a compendious treatment of ancient attitudes in a context of lived experience. Noy (2000) presents the epigraphic evidence on foreigners in the city of Rome during the imperial period. Schneider (2012) examines visual evidence to tease out many facets of Roman ideas about the east and about universal power.

CHAPTER 16

Women in Flavian Rome

Laura K. Van Abbema

Introduction

In his influential work on women and politics in ancient Rome, Bauman (1992, 9) does not extend his analysis beyond the Julio-Claudian dynasts because “the later period would require an entirely new set of parameters.” As Schmidt (2012, 181) observes, the Flavian period sees no “*femmes de pouvoir*” who are the like of Messalina, Agrippina, or Poppaea. Only one Flavian empress, Domitia Longina (wife of Domitian), emerges from the shadows to reveal some similarities to her Julio-Claudian predecessors. Through her mother she was a direct descendant of Augustus; her aunt and sister had also made politically important marriages (though her father Cn. Domitius Corbulo was disgraced after the Pisonian conspiracy); like Livia she bestowed benefits on those seeking social and political advancement (including Flavius Josephus); and like Julia and Messalina, she was rumored to have had affairs (with both Titus and the actor Paris). While reviving the Augustan laws on morality, Domitian’s abuse of imperial power reminded many Romans of the worst times under the Julio-Claudian emperors: for the alleged indiscretion with Paris, Domitian exiled his wife, at least temporarily, and later (in 93) he executed the son of Helvidius Priscus for satirizing an account of their separation.

A restricted view of the political, that is, one confined to the imperial family and its intimates, would of course be wholly inadequate to present purposes and would run the risk of overlooking developments of considerable importance. For if imperial women of the Flavian era were somewhat less visible than their Julio-Claudian predecessors, quite the opposite was true in less exalted circles. One of the striking trends of the period is the increased visibility of well-to-do Roman women in the public sphere. This chapter will attempt to document that development.

If it is broadly true that few public opportunities were available to women in Roman society at any stage of its history – they never enjoyed the right to hold office or to vote

in assemblies – the situation began to improve somewhat in the early imperial period. Three social and political developments contribute to this change. Firstly, the new power structure of the *domus Caesaris* (household of the emperor) meant that proximity to the central ruler and favors from him and his family often translated into political and financial success. A striking figure in this regard is Antonia Caenis, the freedwoman mistress of Vespasian prior to his marriage; they renewed their relationship after the death of Vespasian's wife Flavia Domitilla, and this persisted even when Vespasian became emperor. Caenis' proximity to Vespasian afforded her great political influence and allowed her to become extremely wealthy (see further CHAPTER 27, THE FLAVIAN LEGACY, section 1.3). The second development, partially connected to the first, was an increase in social mobility enjoyed by both ex-slaves and provincials in the first two centuries CE, as reflected in their larger participation in public inscriptions. Finally, with regard to upper class Roman women in particular, there was a long-term shift from *cum manu* marriages to *sine manu* (non-*manus*) marriages. The former, or *manus* (hand), marriage placed the wife and her property under the absolute control of the husband. This traditional form of marriage, though once the norm for the upper classes, had become increasingly rare. Already by the mid-Republic, as Treggiari (1991) documents in her study of Roman marriage, greater numbers of elite families sought to marry off their daughters in *sine manu* marriages, which meant that the bride's property (aside from the dowry) remained with her natal family, a great benefit to those without male heirs. By the end of the Republic, because of this shift in marital practice, women had acquired some degree of financial and legal independence. A Roman woman could inherit and bequeath wealth, divorce her spouse, and possess separate property in marriage (Gardner 1986, 259).

As a consequence of the above changes, and in conjunction with the gradual decline of *tutela* (guardianship), Roman women in the latter half of the first century CE enjoyed a comparatively high level of autonomy. They could act both as means and agent in relatively “new” claims to social and political influence. They not only enjoyed greater prominence within the *domus* (household), but also a larger degree of participation in visible claims to status (for example, honorary inscriptions). Their increased stature is reflected in changes to female nomenclature (Kajanto 1972, Kajava 1994). Traditionally a Roman woman's name consisted of the *nomen* (her father's *gens* name in the feminine form) followed by, where necessary, an additional designation such as Minor (younger) or Secunda (second-born) to distinguish her from elders and siblings (see further GLOSSARY s.v. “nomenclature”). As Kajanto (1972) explains, lengthier female names of the second century CE adopted forms from both maternal and paternal ancestors as *cognomina*, a trend already in evidence in the Flavian Age. This use of *cognomina* by Roman women reflected their increased autonomy: as Kajava (1994, 29) remarks, “the name that finally gave a true individual identity to a Roman woman was the *cognomen*.”

In what follows I will use biographical information found in public inscriptions and the letters of Pliny the Younger (henceforth simply “Pliny”) to examine women's claims to status and their increasing importance in both the *domus* and wider social networks. I will end with a brief discussion of women in both Musonius Rufus' philosophy and Martial's *Epigrams*, focusing in particular on the wider implications of the sexualization of the *matrona* (a legal wife or mother from the upper classes), in which her social status

and political influence over others are criticized in sexual terms. This intersection between sex and politics will provide additional evidence for how the new prominence of Roman women affected in turn certain male discourses on women in the Flavian Age.

1 Women in inscriptions: Influence in the *domus* and wider social networks

Public inscriptions provide crucial evidence both for increased social standing and the corresponding claims to status made by and through women. A few illustrative examples from Italy will suffice to demonstrate how Roman women exercised social influence, as wives, mothers and individuals. Since the dating of inscriptions always poses problems for ancient historians, I will not attempt to analyze change *within* the inscriptions but rather relate my discussion to other social and political developments, addressing especially what it means for Roman women to take part in the “epigraphic habit” or “boom” of the first two centuries CE. According to both MacMullen (1982) and Woolf (1996), the number of public inscriptions (as opposed to simple funerary ones) rose substantially under the Principate, driven in no small part by increased social mobility enjoyed by ex-slaves and provincials, who felt the need to “publicize” an authoritative claim within the space of public honors (Woolf 1996, esp. 28–9). Roman women acted as both authors and recipients of such honorary inscriptions, but I will focus on the latter since public honors paid to women will help to illustrate the various important roles they assumed.

As an increasing number of Roman women became legally and financially independent by the early Principate (Gardner 1986, Treggiari 1991), they could exercise greater control over their own property, including slaves; freedmen/women often left an inscription to honor their former owners (now patrons: see GLOSSARY s.v. “freedman”). In addition, inscriptions often attest to the key role played by women in religious organizations, especially the imperial cult. Religion had always been a public sphere in which women played a role (the Vestal Virgins, the most important priestesses in Roman society, predated the city itself); but they become increasingly active and prominent in the early Principate. Roman women were also honored as patrons of *collegia* (see GLOSSARY s.v.) and as public benefactors. Though only a tiny fraction of the inscriptions from Roman antiquity survive, they suffice to reveal that women, like men, were honored for their services and roles in the public sphere, confirming their participation in the “epigraphic habit” and affording them a place in public discourse. Honorary inscriptions show that Roman women, usually *matronae*, often held important and influential social positions, whether as priestesses, benefactors or patrons – and not only patrons of freed persons, but also of *collegia* and entire communities.

Though scholars have noted the frequent participation of freed persons in the practice of commemoration (Meyer 1990; Mouritsen 1997), comparatively little attention has been paid to the presence of women in this epigraphic space, honored as former owners, now patrons of the manumitted. A pair of undated but representative inscriptions from Rome will illustrate the relation between women and ex-slaves. In the first, Mennia Quarta is honored by her freedman Cypaeus (*CIL* 6.2280): “To the spirits of Mennia Quarta, her freedman Cypaeus set up this inscription to his very worthy patroness (*patronae* / *bene*

merenti).” This epitaph expresses in brief and formulaic terms the relationship that existed between Mennia and her ex-slave. In claiming a space for himself in the epigraphic realm, Cypaeus has also positioned Mennia Quarta in that same public space: as the object of the inscription, she is honored as former *domina* (owner) and current patroness. A more elaborate honorary inscription was left by Lorenia Capitolina to her patroness, Lucia Lorenia Cornelia, who is also designated her foster-mother (*CIL* 6.1448 = *CIL* 6.31657b). The use of the epithet *clarissima* (most illustrious) indicates that Lucia Lorenia Cornelia came from a distinguished family. Lorenia Capitolina not only expresses affection for the woman but also publicly honors her as a superlative patroness (*innocentissima* (most blameless) and *benignissima* (most beneficent)). In this inscription, the patronal and familial overlap: Lorenia Capitolina was not only adopted by Lucia Lorenia Cornelia but also set up the epigraph with her own father, a freedman who had been manumitted by Lucius Crispinus, the patriarch of the family.

A second type of inscription involves the honoring of notable Roman women by the broader public of a given town or city. In such cases, the woman might be commemorated as a representative of her family. So, for example, an inscription from Gabii, dating to the late first century, honors Flavia Variana on account of the financial generosity of her father:

To Flavia Variana, daughter of Titus, on account of the generosity of her father Crescens, freedman of the *Augusti*, who executed with sincere faith all the honors our town conferred on him. The *decuriones* and people have decreed this.

CIL 14.2807 = *ILS* 6220

As freedman of the *Augusti*, Crescens was presumably very wealthy and well able to bestow benefactions. Although we do not know if Flavia Variana was the sole surviving child, her mention in an honorary inscription indicates at the very least that women could publicly represent their families. More significant, of course, are inscriptions in which women are honored not as representatives of their family, but as patrons in their own right. Two short, undated inscriptions from Saepinum and Atina illustrate simple public honors paid to women on account of their benefactions:

To Sossulena, daughter of Gaius, by the citizens [of Saepinum] on account of her financial generosity [*ob meritum/eius*].

CIL 9.2473 = *ILS* 6521

To Pomponia Graphinis in return for her favors/services [*pr(o)/meritis*].

CIL 10.5100

According to Forbis (1996) the word *meritum/a* always signals a financial contribution on the part of the patron. Though we do not know what specific favors or benefactions Sossulena or Pomponia Graphinis bestowed on their respective towns, the dedications clearly attest to each woman’s wealth and social influence.

An intriguing inscription from Sestinum honors a woman named Paulina for her financial generosity (*ob merita*); the individual responsible for the dedication, a certain Petronius Iustus, is not a relation, but a friend, an *amicus et procurator* (*CIL* 11.6022). Unfortunately, we do not know whether Petronius was a private or imperial procurator.

If an imperial procurator, he may have held an important position in social networks, and as Paulina's friend, he must have felt that her services to the city warranted such an inscription. If employed in a private capacity, Petronius' friendly relationship with Paulina could become suspect in other circumstances: in *Ep.* 5.61 (discussed further in section 3 of this chapter) Martial satirizes – and hence sexualizes – this particular relationship between a *domina* and her legal agent, usually a trusted freedman. In considering this dedication, it is important to remember that patronage networks were often informal, and thus we should not discount women who were influential as friends, rather than as wives, mothers or daughters.

In addition to their role as patrons, many Roman women exercised influence through prominent religious positions. In Pompeii, for example, Mamia and Eumachia left a noticeable mark on the public space of the city: as public priestesses associated with the cults of Venus and Ceres, they made significant contributions to the overall development of the east side of the Forum (Cooley and Cooley 2004, 96). In return for the temples and elaborate buildings constructed, Mamia and Eumachia received other public honors, the latter a statue and the former a seat-tomb monument that was “exclusively granted ... by the town council to public benefactors in recognition of their services” (Cooley and Cooley 2004, 97).

Priestesses, of course, did not need to be public benefactors in order to receive commemoration. Like their male counterparts, women associated with the imperial cult were part of the epigraphic boom of the first two centuries CE. In the following first-century inscription from Interamnia, for example, Attia Maxima is acknowledged as the priestess of the *Augustae*:

To [.....] Attia Maxima, daughter of Publius, priestess of the *Augustae*, Tiberius Claudius Vitalis gave this dedication to his excellent wife. Place given by decree of the *decuriones*.

CIL 9.5068

Though the dedication was made by her husband, the inscription itself was a public honor, as can be seen from the formulaic reference to the *decuriones*, the elite council who determined where such an honor could be inscribed and erected within the city. Priestesses were also sometimes honored in a group, as in the following inscription from Regium Iulium, datable to 79 CE:

On account of their munificence [*ob munificentiam earum*], for which the *dendrophori* have honored them, this honor is decreed to those whose names are written beneath: Claudia Iusta [....] priestess, S[---]ia Faustina priestess, Sici[n...]ivocepta, Amullia Primigenia, Satria Pietas, Claudia Ptolemais, Terentia Athenais. Five days before the Ides of April, by *imperator* Vespasian Caesar Augustus, 8 times consul, and by his son Titus Vespasian Caesar Augustus, 7 times consul.

CIL 10.7

Affiliated with the Magna Mater, the women named in the inscription acted as patrons to the *collegium dendrophorum* (carpenters), not only fulfilling their religious duties (at least those designated as a *sacerdos* (priest/priestess)) but also, perhaps, providing financial support or even public feasts and burials. The reference to Vespasian and Titus as consuls lends authority to the public monument and, by implication, to the women named thereon.

While there is inevitably some overlap with the previous category, women could also be patrons of *collegia* without holding a religious position. As we have seen, women could either represent their family or act as individual patrons in their own right. Though scholars tend not to discuss women outside of the imperial family as part of “political history,” the influence they exercised as patrons of collective bodies, like a *collegium*, was crucial to proper social relations and reflects the increasing authority and independence of Roman women. (Hemelrijk 2008 provides a helpful comparative analysis of patronesses and “mothers” of *collegia*, though most of the evidence dates from later inscriptions.)

Two undated inscriptions from Brixia involve women who were patrons to a religious *collegium*. In the first, Aemilia Synethia pays her respects through the dedication to both her patron Aemilia Agrestina and her mother Aemilia Prosoches (CIL 5.4388); in turn, on account of her financial generosity, Aemilia Synethia was honored by the *collegium dendrophororum*, which, as we have seen, was a religious group associated with the Magna Mater. In the second, the freedman Iunius Eufranor and the worshippers of the cult-group of the *Lares* made a dedication to a worthy, but anonymous, patroness (CIL 5.4432). The inscription does not reveal the relationship between Iunius Eufranor and the anonymous woman: he does not appear to be her freedman. Presumably, however, she provided financial support to the *collegium*, as she is described as a *patrona*. Though her name has been lost to us, such a public inscription “advertised” her place in Italian society.

An inscription from Corfinium, dating to the late first century, features a woman honored as a representative of her eminent family:

To Rutilia Paulina, daughter of Gaius, the *seviri Augustales* have made this dedication to this patroness, on account of the generosity [*ob merita*] of her father and of herself.

CIL 9.3182

The *seviri Augustales* were associations, usually of freedmen, who administered the imperial cult in the outlying provinces. Forbis (1996, 243) identifies Rutilia Paulina as the daughter of Q. Julius Cordinus C. Rutilius Gallicus, Domitian’s urban prefect commemorated by Statius (*Silv.* 1.4). This public honor to Paulina has been made on account of the financial generosity (*ob merita*) of both her father and herself, suggesting her autonomy and individual importance. Female patronage of the *Augustales* was not a rare occurrence (see D’Arms 2003, 128–9, discussing the interesting case of Nymphidia Monime of Misenum).

Scholars have recently begun to recognize the full extent of women’s influence as patronesses of various public works, mainly architecture, but also public feasts and shows. Saller (1982, esp. 65, 106) noted Livia’s extensive patronage, which derived from her own wealth and, as Augustus’ wife, from her proximity to the emperor (for example, in the career advancement of young men). Perhaps influenced by the empress, notable women from the provinces also acted as prominent patronesses of their hometown: Plancia Magna of Asia Minor, for example (Fantham *et al.* 1994, 363–6; Boatwright 1991). In Pompeii, in addition to Eumachia’s large building, Julia Felix left an elegant bath complex, complete with upper rooms and apartments for rent (Cooley and Cooley 2004, 46, 171). In Italian provincial cities, the following pair of Roman women are honored as important patrons of public works, and though the inscriptions date from the latter half of the

second century, they illustrate an important trend: Baebia Pontias from Cures (*CIL* 9.4970 = *ILS* 6559) was honored with a public statue, and she not only remitted the cost but also distributed gifts (including money) to each man of the town; and from Aeclanum (*CIL* 9.1156 = *ILS* 5878) Geminia Sabina, the mother of Tiberius Claudius Maximus, honored her son by paving three miles of road to Herdonia with her own money (at the cost of about 200 000 *sestertii* according to Duncan-Jones 1974, 124–26, 157–62).

2 The social influence of women in Pliny's *Letters*

Another important development in the early Principate was the increasing importance attached to cognatic relations (that is, those traced through female family members) among the Roman elite. In comparing the letters of Cicero (106–43 BCE) and those of Pliny, Saller (1994, 84–87) notes a crucial difference in their respective use of the terms *familia* (family) and *domus* (household), with Pliny's more frequent use of the latter reflecting the greater stress placed in his letters on cognate kin, and for which *domus* rather than *familia* was the appropriate point of reference. So in letters recommending friends and clients, Pliny invariably refers to the *domus*, including cognate kin. On the changing political context and the “new” aristocracy, Saller (1994, 95) remarks, “Given the various aspects of honor and status involved in the *domus*, it is not surprising that it became increasingly emphasized as *familia* became less suitable. A few senators might still look back to their agnatic ancestors in their claim to *dignitas*, but most of the new senatorial families had to find other standards of social status.” Although Saller limits his discussion to the family as a unit, Pliny also gives us a picture of Roman women in various social networks, especially as friends and patrons. The “honor” afforded such women through the publication of his letters mirrors the inclusion of women in the public discourse of inscriptions. In the context of increasing social mobility in an openly hierarchical political structure, Roman women could use their own resources and connections both for family members and for aspiring friends and freed persons. Thus, women like Pompeia Celerina or Ummidia Quadratilla, though not prevalent in our sources as a whole, are representative of the autonomy achieved by Roman women and the influence they exercised in social relations.

Letter 1.14 offers a characteristic example of a recommendation letter in which Pliny, while describing a protégé's family background, includes relatives traced through the female line. Having been asked to recommend a husband for Junius Mauricus' niece, he puts forward his friend Minicius Acilianus, pointing out that he comes from a distinguished *domus*, and drawing attention to his maternal grandmother, Serrana Procula of Patavium (modern Padua), a model of propriety even to her stern compatriots (*Patavinis quoque severitatis exemplum est*, *Epist.* 1.14.6). Pliny also mentions the importance of a maternal uncle, P. Acilius, from whose family Minicius derives his *cognomen*. Even though the census qualifications were obvious to his aristocratic audience, Pliny downplays the role of wealth in Minicius' immediate family while emphasizing the prestige, even political importance, accorded female ancestors. This letter of recommendation not only provides an illustrative description of an Italian provincial family rising to the equestrian order but also confirms the importance of women within the *domus* in the Flavian period (cf. *Epist.* 3.1, 2.13, 10.4, the last two on the financial contribution of Voconius Romanus' mother to his political stature).

Letters 4.19 and 8.11 reveal the central role of women within the family of Pliny's wife, Calpurnia (Birley 2000, 45). Like many Romans who lost one or both parents at a young age due to high mortality rates, she was raised by her aunt, Calpurnia Hispulla, the sole surviving child of Calpurnius Fabatus (Birley 2000, 45). At the beginning of each letter Pliny emphasizes the affection that Calpurnia Hispulla had for her brother, his wife's father and Pliny's friend. Although Fabatus was still alive, and hence Calpurnia Hispulla was presumably not *sui iuris*, she acted as the primary influence within the family. In 4.19, Pliny praises his wife's virtues and literary interests, implying that her aunt Calpurnia, the addressee, was an educated woman. Pliny also mentions Calpurnia Hispulla's influence in his own life, given her friendship with his mother: "For while you honored my mother as if she were your own, so you formed and encouraged me from infancy, presaging that I should become all that my wife now thinks I am" (*Epist.* 4.19.7). Indeed Pliny seems to know Hispulla better than her father, whom he addresses as a recent acquaintance (Sherwin-White 1966, 296). Perhaps due to Calpurnia's young age, her aunt Hispulla even accompanies her and Pliny to Bithynia. In addition to an instrumental role in Pliny's upbringing and marriage, the *cognomen* Hispulla may also link her to the wife of the consular Corellius Rufus (Syme 1968, 144; Carlon 2009, 68–99).

The sister of Corellius Rufus figures in *Letter* 7.11, which deals with a piece of property that Pliny had inherited along with several coheirs. He justifies to Calpurnius Fabatus (his wife's grandfather) the immediate sale, without waiting for a public auction, of his five-twelfths share of the inheritance to his friend Corellia (Birley 2000, 51; Syme 1968, 147; also Raepsaet-Charlier 1987, 268; Carlon 2009, 68–99). Fabatus was evidently concerned for the interests of his own *domus*, which was essentially in the hands of the young Calpurnia. Pliny justifies the direct sale by referring to a "higher obligation" (*maius officio*, *Epist.* 7.11.2). This sense of obligation to Corellia was due to several connections between herself and Pliny. He states the following: "I have the highest esteem for Corellia, both as the sister of Corellius Rufus, whose memory is most sacred to me, and as she was an intimate friend of my mother's. Besides, I am bound by a long-standing ties of friendship (*vetera iura*) to her husband, the excellent Minicius Iustus" (7.11.3). Pliny remarks that his coheirs are not obligated to sell their portion, "since they have not the same connections with Corellia that I have" (*Epist.* 7.11.8). As his use of the terms *iura* and *amicitia* (7.11.8) indicate, Pliny clearly has patronage networks with Corellia and her family. The most important point of this letter, however, is that Pliny is selling the property to Corellia directly: though he discusses his relationships with her brother, husband, and son to justify his "obligation," Corellia is the one purchasing a portion of the estate with her own money; she is the representative of her *domus* in this particular instance.

As *Letter* 3.3 makes clear, Pliny also had friendly relations with Corellia Hispulla, the daughter of Corellius Rufus (Sherwin-White 1966, 213; Carlon 2009, 68–99). Addressing Corellia directly, Pliny discusses the schooling of her son and offers advice as well as the name of a tutor. She appears to be educated in much the same manner as Calpurnia Hispulla or Pliny's own wife. Although from an exalted equestrian family, Corellia's husband and his brother evidently died before achieving senatorial status. Although Pliny pays his respects to her son's agnatic ancestors, he identifies Corellia's father as the best model for the boy, thereby privileging the cognatic or maternal line. Sherwin-White (1966, 212) suggests that the son may be Corellius Pansa (*cos. ord.* 122): "This combination of odd names suggests a connection with the Neratii of the Beneventum

region, where a landowner called Neratius Corellius is known at this period, and with the Vespasianic consul, M. Hirrius Fronto Neratius Pansa, who might be the *avus paternus*.” The name Corellius Pansa, however, reflects a maternal *nomen*, as is the case with Ummidius Quadratus (in 7.24). In addition to the use of *cognomina* to reflect the growing importance of women in familial and social connections, the maternal *nomen* as well marks the female as an integral status marker of the *domus*. Pliny exclaims “what a glorious weight of ancestral reputation [the son] has to support” (*Epist.* 3.3.6). The same, however, could be said for Corellia herself, who is responsible for the education of her son, and also shares in the nominal status of the *domus*, acting as a representative of familial rank in society. Given the high rate of senatorial turnover and the importance of the *domus* – with its female members – in the political advancement of equestrian and municipal elites, Corellia Hispulla’s influence should not be seen as an isolated case (cf. 4.17, which also illustrates the friendship between Pliny and Corellia: he is asked to defend her in court).

As the previous discussion will have made clear, friendship often overlaps with patronage networks, even familial connections. In a number of letters Pliny touches on the connection between women and wealth, primarily concerning lawsuits and legacies (on female legatees in Pliny, note Carlon 2009, 100–37). In so doing he brings to our attention women who are treated with affection and command respect as individuals, and who play an important role in the maintenance of social networks. In *Letter* 2.4, for example, Pliny urges his addressee, a woman named Calvina, to accept, as a matter of family honor, the inheritance from her father, despite the debts on the estate that “even a man would have found burdensome” (*Epist.* 2.4.1). Pliny is clearly the *patronus*, the figure of greater socio-economic status, in this patronage relationship, which Calvina has also “inherited” from her father. During her father’s lifetime Pliny had contributed 100 000 *sestertii* towards Calvina’s dowry; now he proceeds to acquit her of the entire debt her father had owed him (2.4.2).

While remarking on two notable women of wealth and the execution of their wills in *Letter* 2.20, Pliny criticizes men like M. Aquilius Regulus, a despised legacy hunter (cf. Arrionilla in *Epist.* 1.5; Sherwin-White 1966, 93–4). Pliny relates the experiences of Velleius Blaesus, and two women, Verania and Aurelia, all of whom were scammed by Regulus (Birley 2000, 41, 98–9). Verania was the daughter of the governor of Britain under Nero, Q. Veranius, and the wife of L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi Licinianus, who was adopted by Galba in 69 CE due to his distinguished family connections (he was later murdered by the praetorian guard as told in Tacitus). Like Arria and Fannia who stood by their husbands during politically dangerous times, she courageously secured her husband’s burial after his assassination; she was later interred with him and her name was added to his memorial. Regulus paid Verania a visit when she was extremely ill. In order to reassure her of restored health, he asks the day and hour of her birth (*Epist.* 2.20.3; he was probably too cautious to consult any astrologers, whose arts were forbidden under the Principate) and feigns a consultation of the *haruspices* (diviners). Pliny clearly disapproves of both his superstition and his blatant yet successful attempt to gain the woman’s money. Aurelia was another woman of property who succumbed to Regulus’ scheming. She cannot be identified definitively, but may have been a relative of the consular Aurelii Fulvi or of Aurelius Priscus (*cos.* 67). When signing her will, a ceremonial act in Roman culture, she dressed appropriately for the occasion. Regulus, who was

present as a witness, asked for Aurelia's fine clothes, thus obliging her to open the will and add this legacy to him (*Epist.* 2.20.10–11). Interestingly, Pliny's account seems to imply that Aurelia and Verania were free to make what wills they liked, though under the nominal direction of a *tutor legitimus* (legal guardian; a Roman woman was exempted if she received the *ius trium liberorum* (right of three children)). Clearly by this period, women were not only financially independent (they could enter a number of contracts without a tutor) but also increasingly sought out for their wealth by despicable men like Regulus (cf. the adopted daughter of 8.18 whose wealth is restored by her uncle; this woman is the elder Domitia Lucilla, grandmother of Marcus Aurelius). Thus Roman women had become important "brokers" in the dispersal of wealth and the proper maintenance of social connections.

In the Flavian period, Roman women not only bequeath legacies to relatives but also to friends and freedmen. In *Letter* 4.10, for example, a woman named Sabina is said to have left money to both Pliny and her slave Modestus, though without expressly freeing the latter (Birley 2000, 86). As one of her heirs Pliny feels obligated to offer his legal assistance; he argues that Modestus should enjoy the legacy, and hence be freed, since that was Sabina's intention. In *Letter* 5.1, Pliny reports receiving a problematic legacy from Pomponia Galla, in circumstances that illustrate the tensions that could arise in the complicated networks of both familial and patronal relations (Birley 2000, 81–2). Pomponia Galla comes from the highest circles of Roman society: she is most likely the daughter of the praetorian C. Pomponius Gallus Didius Rufus and hence connected with A. Didius Gallus Fabricius Veiento and the consular Pomponii of the period (Mratschek-Halfmann 1993). She had disinherited her son Asudius Curianus and designated Pliny, Sertorius Severus, and several eminent equestrians as coheirs. After beseeching Pliny to make a gift of his share, Curianus initiated a lawsuit against the other coheirs, who were apprehensive about the case due to the "distrust of the times" (*metu temporum*, *Epist.* 5.1.7). As had happened to other Roman citizens, they feared that the civil suit would become a capital one due to their past friendship with political outcasts like Gratilla and her husband Rusticus (Birley 2000, 99). (In the last years of Domitian's reign Rusticus was put to death and Gratilla banished.) Pliny diffuses the situation by talking to Curianus directly and by persuading him to accept a fourth part of the estate, an amount that Pliny increases as a benefaction. Although there were numerous attempts to restrain the dispersal of wealth outside of one's family (for example, *Lex Cincia* of 204 BCE), by Pliny's time gifts to outsiders were valid if carried out with the proper formalities (Gardner 1986, 163–203). The case of Pomponia Galla who, acting on her own behest, disinherited her son and left several legacies to other prominent Romans, illustrates the dramatic social consequences of these legal developments. The letter also highlights the political dimension of *amicitia*: Pliny manages to foster relations with different members of the same family – including women – in order to maintain his career and secure his place in the social and political hierarchy. (Also note the case of Attia Variola in 6.33, who was wrongly disinherited by her father; on the increased visibility of women in criminal prosecutions, cf. 7.6, and Furia Prima in 10.59, 10.60; Gardner 1986, 182–90).

One of the most interesting women in Pliny's *Letters* is Pompeia Celerina, who is either addressed or discussed in 1.4, 1.18 (a dream), 3.19, 6.10, and 10.51 (Birley 2000, 80; Syme 1968, 150; Raepsaet-Charlier 1987, 626; Mratschek-Halfmann 1993, 288).

She is presumably the mother of Pliny's second wife, and remains an important friend to him after her daughter's death in 96–97. As is clear from *Letter* 1.4, Pompeia is very wealthy: Pliny opens the letter by extolling the magnificence of her villas in Oriculum, Narnia, Carsulae, and Perusia (*Epist.* 1.4.1). Although Pompeia is now married to Bittius Proculus, these Umbrian villas are her own and are managed by her; they evidently help her to maintain friendly relations with other aristocrats. For Pliny Pompeia Celerina is not simply a temporary familial relation through marriage, but rather a socially important woman in terms of *amicitia* and patronage. In *Letter* 6.10, Pliny mentions another villa of Pompeia's at Alsium in Etruria: the villa had originally belonged to Verginius Rufus, who had not only defeated Julius Vindex but also refused the emperorship in 69 CE. Pliny does not elaborate on any connections between those two families (she purchased the estate from Verginius' heir), but clearly Pompeia had friends in very high places (cf. *Epist.* 10.51, in which Pliny mentions the role of Pompeia in the promotion of her relative Caelius Clemens to the proconsulship of Bithynia). Pliny himself benefits from Pompeia's wealth and continued friendship; in *Letter* 3.19, when purchasing a piece of land, he remarks that he has "a resource in the purse of my wife's mother, which I can use with the same freedom as my own" (*Epist.* 3.19.8).

Not to be overlooked in our survey of women and patronage is Ummidia Quadratilla, whose character Pliny sketches out by way of an obituary notice in *Letter* 7.24 (Birley 2000, 96; Syme 1968, 150–1; Raepsaet-Charlier 1987, 828–9). She was clearly an exceptional woman, given her great wealth and passionate support of pantomimes (which Pliny deemed "excessive for a women of her high station," *Epist.* 7.24.4). But it should not be forgotten that other women outside the imperial family were noted patrons of the arts, as is evident from the occasional poetry of Statius and Martial (for example, Marcella addressed in *Mart. Ep.* 12.31; see Mratschek-Halfmann 1993, 25). Pliny's description of Ummidia Quadratilla is invaluable for providing a literary portrait, outside of epigram and satire, of a "scandalous" woman. Ummidia lived to a ripe old age, dying just short of her 80th year, and Pliny's references to her robust health seem to reflect a concern over her more "manly" dispositions, given the connection between the body and morality: "she enjoyed till her last sickness an uninterrupted state of health, with a strength and firmness of body unusual even to matrons in their prime" (7.24.1). Ummidia came from a very influential political family, as she was the daughter of C. Ummidius Durmius Quadratus of Casinum who eventually reached the governorship of Syria before dying in 60 CE. Given his close friendship with her grandson, C. Ummidius Quadratus (who would eventually hold the consulship as Hadrian's colleague in 118), Pliny is careful to circumscribe his criticism of her more "frivolous" pursuits (including checkers or backgammon, 7.24.5). He mentions early in the letter that she left an excellent will (*honestissimo testamento*, 7.24.1), in which she disposed of two-thirds of her estate to her adopted grandson and the remaining third to her granddaughter. Although Ummidia was "exceedingly devoted to the pleasures of the town," her grandson lived in this family "with great severity of conduct, yet at the same time with the utmost compliance" (7.24.3).

Clearly Ummidia Quadratilla was a very wealthy woman; she even built an amphitheater in her hometown of Casinum (*CIL* 10.5813 = *ILS* 5628; *AE* 1992, 244). Sick (1999) suggests that she was a successful businesswoman who profited from owning an accomplished group of slaves. The inscriptional evidence further proves her influence as

a *domina* (cf. AE 1985, 189 on her slave Dionysius). Though Pliny criticizes her for enjoying pantomimes, he does not intimate that she was sexually involved with the performers (cf. Juv. 6.60). Nor does he think it exceptional for a woman to act as a patron in this regard; rather he attacks those sycophants who excessively flatter Ummidia in the hopes of receiving a legacy (*Epist.* 7.24.4). Though we do not know which games (*ludi*) are meant, Pliny implies that Ummidia sponsored dramatic shows on several occasions (7.24.6–7; Sick 1999, 341). Both Domitian and Trajan attempted to abolish the public performances of pantomimes, but to no avail, not only because they were wildly popular but also because providing such public shows had long been important among the elite for maintaining one's socio-political prominence. Although Ummidia's spouse was long dead, she sponsored these shows as a financially independent woman, not as the grandmother of the young Quadratus. And although according to Pliny her wealth attracted a baser class of men, her social influence cannot be denied and indeed reflects the public significance of an increasing number of women at this time. As Sick (1999, 345) rightly notes, "in a society that was very concerned about the exchange of duties and gifts, Ummidia ... might have acquired forms of power not traditionally accessible to Roman women".

Roman women also figure as political capital in relationships of *amicitia*. Pliny first mentions Arria and Fannia in *Letter* 3.11 (Birley 2000, 38, 59), where he rather dramatically lists several of his friends, who have been either killed or exiled, to underscore his own intrepidity in daring to pay a visit to Artemidorus after Domitian had expelled philosophers from Rome: "I had before my eyes the sufferings of seven of my friends, Senecio, Rusticus, and Helvidius being just then put to death, at the same time that Mauricus, Gratilla, Arria, and Fannia were sent into exile. And scorched as I was with the lightning of the state, which thus flashed round me, I had great reason to expect it would not be long before it destroyed me too" (*Epist.* 3.11.3). While the elder Helvidius had formed a faction against Vespasian, Pliny refers here to the younger Helvidius and his friends who perished under Domitian. The younger Arria and Fannia, mother and daughter both noted for their republican virtues, married Thrasea Paetus and the elder Helvidius, respectively. Like Gratilla in *Epist.* 5.1, Arria and Fannia stood by their husbands after the Pisonian conspiracy. Then in 93 both were involved with Senecio in the composition of the *Life of Helvidius*, and after returning from exile in 97, they stirred up Pliny's attempted prosecution of Publicius Certus, the enemy of the younger Helvidius. Pliny, however, exaggerates both the danger he faced under the Flavians, especially Domitian, and his connections to the family of Helvidius. Sherwin-White (1966, 243) remarks that any direct connection to Helvidius' family "seems to have been very slight before his accidental association with Senecio in the trial of Massa brought him into the circle, and made him the ladies' friend." This association with Arria and Fannia is important for Pliny: they figure in his retelling of the political past as traditionally loyal wives, exhibiting a strength of will that was considered rare in women (see Carlon 2009, 18–67).

In *Letter* 7.19, Pliny describes his concern upon learning of Fannia's ill state of health (she had contracted a fever while attending to one of the Vestal Virgins). Although Pliny describes her using references to the traditional virtues of a matron, he lauds her courage "worthy of her husband Helvidius and her father Thrasea" (*Epist.* 7.19.3). This was on display when she requested that Senecio compose and publish the life of Helvidius, an indirect political threat for which she was banished. Pliny states: "She even had the courage

when her effects were confiscated, to preserve a copy of those very memoirs which the senate, overawed by the tyranny of the times, had ordered to be suppressed; and took with her as the companion of her exile, what had been the cause of it" (7.19.6). Pliny also praises her mother, the younger Arria, whom he feels he is losing a second time. He says that he "loved and honored them both," that "in their prosperity and their adversity, my services were at their command" (7.19.10). Clearly Pliny owed a debt of gratitude to the family, especially since Arulenus Rusticus had encouraged him as a young man. As we have seen in *Epist.* 3.11 (and next in 9.13), Pliny refers to Arria and Fannia as his friends, and though he may exaggerate his connections to this family only after the accession of Nerva and Trajan, he considers these two women to be important individual representatives of their noble *domus*.

Letter 9.13 begins by mentioning Pliny's *On the Avenging of Helvidius* (*libros quos de Helvidii ultione composui*, *Epist.* 9.13.1) and goes on to provide details not included in that work, and in particular a lengthy account of Pliny's attack against Publicius Certus before the senate. Through Anteia, the widow of Helvidius, Pliny makes known to Arria and Fannia, returned from exile, that he plans to avenge Helvidius' death (Birley 2000, 37). As Sherwin-White (1966, 491) notes, "an accusation was a means of securing political advancement." Since Arria and Fannia were not senators and could not act as prosecutors (though women of the senatorial order could be tried on charges of extortion), the senators Avidius Quietus and Cornutus Tertullius spoke on their behalf. Also remarkable about this particular trial was the necessary sanction of Nerva: "such control over the judicial function of the senate did not exist in the Julio-Claudian period" (Sherwin-White 1966, 498). So as the *princeps* apparently gained more control over judicial affairs, familial connections themselves become more important – and women in these connections – as political advantages or punishments were often determined by one's proximity to the *domus Caesaris*. Pliny heightens his dramatic role in the affair, not only relating the potential political dangers he faced but also boasting of his own successful speech before the senate. As Pliny's friends, the invocation of Arria and Fannia serves to enhance his own position in this very public display of aristocratic competition (Carlon 2009, 18–67).

3 The sexualized *matrona*

While there is a renewed emphasis under the Flavians on traditional feminine virtues (evident, for example, in the numerous depictions of women working wool in Domitian's Forum Transitorium), there is much to suggest increasing divergence from the ancient ideal. The philosopher Musonius Rufus (circa 30–101), a prominent figure in Rome during the Flavian period, declared that women were not innately inferior to men, and accordingly advocated for the education of women (*Discourse* 3). This seems to reflect contemporary trends: Hemelrijk (1999) argues convincingly that the education of women spread to the sub-elites after Vespasian. With regard to the Stoic virtues, such gender symmetry meant that women could exhibit "manly" virtues like *andreia* or courage, which, as we have seen in the examples of Arria and Fannia, cannot be divorced from the political context. Although a discussion of the "conjugal union" in Musonius' philosophy would go beyond the scope of this chapter, the topic is related to the wider

development of the sexualization of the *matrona*. Scholars have rightly revised Treggiari's analysis of companionate marriage in recent years. Literary sources from the first two centuries CE frequently employ the language of love elegy when addressing or describing one's wife – for example, Pliny's letters to Calpurnia in which he becomes the *exclusus amator* while she fondly handles his books as if each were the male sex organ (cf. Mart. Ep. 10.64, addressed to Polla as both reader and patron).

Martial's poetry offers a wealth of evidence on the sexualization of the *matrona*. Since he refers to women in over 300 of his epigrams and often blurs the boundary between different types of women, especially courtesan and matron, I cannot fully address the complexity of gender and sexuality in his poems here. I would like to discuss, however, Martial's treatment of what I will refer to as the *meretrix matrona*, the sexually promiscuous matron, as it relates to my preceding analysis of Roman women in the Flavian Age. Though epigram tends to the stereotypical and exaggerated, Martial here offers a new take on a conventional figure. Certainly he seems to find it reprehensible that older women are still interested in sex. In *Epigram* 7.75, for example, he expresses mock indignation that an “ugly old woman” (*deformis anusque*, Ep. 7.75.1) wishes “to give and yet not to give” (*vis dare nec dare vis*, 7.75.2) – that is, the woman is unwilling to offer money in return for sexual gratification. Martial's jest relies on the double sense of the verb *dare* (to give), which encapsulates both sexual and financial favors. In a similar vein, the ugly old woman also figures as the target of legacy-hunters, as with Maronilla in *Epigram* 1.10. Like Maronilla, Aelia and Naevia, in 1.19 and 2.26 respectively, are depicted as near death due to a persistent cough (cf. 5.39). Though Martial lampoons old women and the men who satisfy their desires, he is apparently not altogether immune to the attraction of a legacy himself:

nubere Paula cupit nobis, ego ducere Paulam
nolo: anus est. vellem, si magis esset anus.

Mart. Ep. 10.8

Paula wishes to marry me; I don't want to take Paula to wife: she is an old woman.
I might be willing if she were older.

Watson (2005) well observes that Martial draws attention to a new sexual ideal for the Roman matron of his own day, in which she is loyal to her husband but acts as a *meretrix* within her own marriage. But the “sexualization of the *matron*” is a larger phenomenon with both positive and negative valuations. The matron-as-Venus statues of the second century CE, for example, positively depict the sexualization of the *matrona*. While the head and face remain that of a dignified, even severe, Roman matron, the body is eroticized like the goddess of love herself. D'Ambra (2000) convincingly argues that such nudity serves as adornment, that is, as a means to bolster one's status, especially as Venus was closely tied to the first imperial family. Martial, however, also offers a negative valuation on the sexualization of the Roman wife, especially as the conflation of courtesan and matron is often placed in a social/political context.

Numerous women in Martial's poems figure in some sort of status differential, like women who bring a large dowry, who marry beneath their station or otherwise transgress traditional social boundaries and expectations (e.g. Philaenis in Ep. 7.67). Martial also criticizes Roman wives as patrons, often blurring the literary categories of matron and courtesan in the process. In *Epigram* 5.61, for example, while addressing the

unsuspecting husband, Martial attacks a *crispulus*, an apparently effeminate freedman who acts as *procurator* for his *domina* (cf. 12.49, in which Martial addresses the *procurator* of the rich Postumilla). As Howell (1995, 144) remarks, “the word [*domina*] would allude to their former relationship [of master and slave], but there is also a hint of the use of the word by lovers.” Gabinia, an aristocratic woman in *Epigram* 7.57, is also criticized as a *patrona*: she has turned Achilles, once a boxer, into a member of the equestrian order, and though the obscene connotations are open to different interpretations, the sexualization of this Roman matron in the context of social mobility is not in doubt. In *Epigram* 11.29, the poet’s recommendation to Phyllis to provide material inducements again marks the conflation of the sexual and the socio-economic. Though the sex-hungry old woman is a common theme, the “reverse” transfer of wealth in this epigram is also reminiscent of clients who pay court to female patrons. Finally *Epigram* 2.56 shades into the political context in talking of the conduct of Gallus’ wife. Since she is said to be “among Libyan tribes” (*Ep.* 2.56.1), we are to assume that Gallus was the high-ranking governor of that North African province. Some governors were in the habit of extorting goods and money from the locals; this epigram suggests that their wives might also benefit from their husband’s office (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.33–4). The punch-line comes in the last word of the poem – *dare*: Gallus’ wife does not receive favors but gives them, that is, she is in the habit of offering to the local (non-Roman) men her sexual skills. In Roman comedy, Plautus often used the word *dare* to conflate the financial and sexual transactions of courtesans to humorous effect. Here, applied to the legitimate wife of a high-ranking imperial official, the *meretrix matrona* becomes, at least potentially, politically problematic.

Conclusion

If the day-to-day domestic lives of Roman women as well as the stock views on female vices and virtues did not change drastically during the early Principate, the situation was by no means static. Though still constrained by the social mores and cultural expectations of patriarchal Rome, women gradually gained a greater degree of autonomy and a larger presence in the public sphere. As the biographical content from inscriptions and from Pliny’s letters demonstrates, many women outside of the imperial family exercised key roles both in the *domus* and in wider social networks as friends and patrons. Flavian women not only benefited from trends set by their imperial predecessors but also furthered those developments. Additional studies are needed: the lives of various women throughout the Empire not only illuminate social and cultural changes during this crucial period but also affect – albeit in an indirect and complex manner – what it meant to be “Roman.”

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FURTHER READING

Dixon (2001) provides a helpful introduction to Roman women in various sources, informed by recent theories of gender and sexuality. She discusses ways to read both the female body and the public face of Roman women (the latter exploring both legal and economic roles and incorporating inscriptional evidence). Carlon (2009) looks at the women in Pliny's letters through the lens of the Roman author's self-representation. Firmly based on the historical context and prosopographical details as well as consideration for the arrangement of the letters, this study offers a thoughtful analysis of how these women contribute to Pliny's "lasting fame." Whereas Carlon's work offers more literary analysis of Pliny's letters as a whole (for example, arrangement), Shelton (2013) emphasizes the individual biographies and thus provides a broader historical context and a deeper look at the lived experiences of Roman women in the late first/early second century CE. Forbis (1996) is a useful compilation of inscriptional evidence from the Italian peninsula (and many of the inscriptions mentioned in this chapter are listed in it). The author is mindful of gender issues while providing a thorough contextualization for municipal life in general. Gardner (1986) remains an instrumental secondary source for anyone interested in women in Roman law. This book is dense with information yet very accessible to readers new to the subject. It covers multiple topics ranging from marriage and divorce to sexual offenses to work and slaves/freedwomen, and concludes with a thought-provoking discussion on the "emancipation" of Roman women. Hemelrijk (1999) is a superlative, comprehensive analysis of educated women in the Roman world. It provides an expansive context not only on the social position of upper-class women but also on Roman education in general. Treggiari (1991) provides a comprehensive analysis of Roman marriage. In addition to *matrimonium* and separation, it discusses the ideals of the marital relationship as well as property, the dowry, and the *domus* in general.

CHAPTER 17

Education in the Flavian Age

Yun Lee Too

Introduction

Evidence for the practice and history of Roman education has come down to us in many forms, including inscriptions and works of art; but by far the most important, detailed, and abundant sources are literary. Our knowledge of Roman education in the Flavian period – and others besides – is dominated by the figure of Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (Quintilian), author of the *Institutio Oratoria* (*The Education of an Orator*), a 12-volume treatise that comprehensively maps out, with both practical and theoretical reflection, the ideal Roman aristocratic education, starting with infancy and culminating in the rhetorical training of the young man.

Despite – or perhaps because of – Quintilian, education in the Flavian period has often been neglected within a consideration of Roman education, as is apparent from a survey of the standard histories of the subject. For Aubrey Gwynn, writing *Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian* in the early twentieth century, Roman education reaches a culmination with Quintilian's thoughtful consolidation of ancient pedagogical theory in the *Institutio Oratoria*, but it is merely incidental that this culmination occurs in the Flavian period (1926, 242). There is no recognition of Quintilian as a Flavian author, only the acknowledgment that he follows on from Cicero and is a Ciceronian. In *Education in Ancient Rome* (1977), Stanley Bonner also does not address education in the Flavian period per se. The only Flavian author considered by him is Quintilian and because Bonner's study is organized by topic, rather than by individual or strict chronology, he gives us references to this author scattered throughout the book. Quintilian is regarded as authoritative and timeless, and not as representative of a particular era or environment. In Henri Marrou's influential *A History of Education in Antiquity* (1956) the situation is yet worse. Marrou is more interested in Greek than in Roman education and very little in the way of periodization is offered for the Roman period. Furthermore, Flavian authors are afforded scant attention.

Other scholars who do not deal with education acknowledge Quintilian as a Flavian author, if only in mentioning this as his era. Some try to do more with this recognition. Alain Gowing, for instance, has recently attempted to read Quintilian as a product of the Flavian era: he views him as seeking to depoliticize the Republic in his writing, seeking to separate oratory from the political sphere (2005, 106–9). Gowing’s contextualization is important: Quintilian’s act of “depoliticization” is of course necessarily a political one, and points to a fundamental shift in elite education in the imperial period.

Flavian education is a topic that merits attention and I come to it with my own baggage, which needs to be unpacked as I proceed. I arrive with the realization that elite Roman education at this time is not just Quintilian and his *Institutio Oratoria*. It is, indeed, a far more varied and complex entity than the designation “education in ancient Rome” might suggest because it is Latin *and* Greek. People educate and more importantly, talk about education while coming to Rome from different parts of the empire so that regionalism may emerge in the discourse of how one learns and how one teaches. So this chapter recognizes that Plutarch and Dio of Prusa were also writing and working during this period, and bring a perspective rather different from Quintilian’s. The Greek East was generally more skeptical of Rome, its achievements and its institutions than was the Latinized West.

It is important to recognize at the outset that organized education in antiquity is the prerogative of the powerful. The powerful have themselves educated, often by using individuals less powerful and less wealthy than themselves; they also see to it that the disempowered are educated to remain so. Throughout antiquity people were taught to rule or to be ruled by those who had authority, either as rulers themselves or as given to them by rulers. In Rome during the Flavian period, advanced education, as described by Quintilian, is no less the domain of the elite. For the lower classes, education was generally a limited and often an informal enterprise.

Though this chapter focuses on Flavian education in narrow “Roman” and “Greek” contexts, it should be noted that the Flavian period saw significant developments on the non-Roman “periphery” as well. To take one example, the fall of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE had a profound effect on education in the Jewish world. As Brighton discusses elsewhere in this volume, the end of the Temple cult meant a de-centering of religious and educational authority: responsibility for maintaining Judaism now devolved to individual communities (see CHAPTER 13, FLAVIAN JUDEA, section 4). As a consequence, new centers of rabbinic learning arose, most famously at Jamnia, founded by Yohanan ben Zakkai.

I begin my survey of Flavian education with the observation that, even in the programmatically narrow sense just declared, it was geographically and culturally diffuse. As a consequence, the training of youths and the discussion of such training was often focused less on Rome than on *Romanitas*. A passage that merits attention in this regard is Tacitus’ account of Agricola, as governor of Britain, providing for and encouraging the “liberal education” (*liberalibus artibus*) of local chieftains’ sons:

iam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire, et ingenia Britannorum studiis Gallorum anteferre, ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent. Inde etiam habitus nostri honor et frequens toga; paulatimque discessum ad delenimenta vitiorum, porticus et balinea et conviviorum elegantiam. Idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.

Tac. *Agr.* 21

Moreover he [sc. Agricola] began to train the sons of the chieftains in a liberal education, and to give preference to the native talent of the Briton as against the plodding Gaul. As a result, the nation that used to reject the Latin language began to aspire to rhetoric: further, the wearing of our dress became a distinction and the toga came into fashion, and little by little the Britons were seduced into alluring vices: the lounge, the bath, and the well appointed dinner table. The simple natives gave the name of ‘culture’ to this factor of their slavery.

tr. M. Hutton

This acculturation of local elites was a standard Roman imperial practice, and here Tacitus attests to its effectiveness. Education is the crucial means by which local elites were culturally “refashioned,” inducing in them Roman habits, along with desire for the products of empire that, in Tacitus’ cynical view, furthered their state of subjugation.

1 Quintilian

If Tacitus affords a glimpse of the process of “Romanization” in its early stages, then the Spaniard Quintilian – assuming he was not of Roman settler stock¹ – would appear to embody the “finished product.” Quintilian was a gifted individual from a Romanized province that had benefited from the granting of Latin rights to all its municipalities (see CHAPTER 1, SOURCES AND EVIDENCE, section 2). In the next generation Spain would supply Rome with its emperors; already in the Flavian period it was providing teachers, artists and intellectuals. Quintilian can be counted with Columella and Martial as writers from Spain who made vital contributions to Roman culture during the Flavian period. He was born around 35 CE at Calagurris (modern Calahorra), in Hispania Citerior, the northeastern or Tarraconese province of Spain. As a young man he was, early in the reign of Nero, sent by his father to Rome to study rhetoric. There he struck up a relationship with the orator Domitius Afer, a native of Gaul, who is thought to have been responsible for Quintilian’s self-modeling after Cicero. After the death of Afer in 59 Quintilian returned to Spain, perhaps to practice law. There he evidently attracted the attention of Galba, then governor of Hispania Citerior: when the latter was proclaimed emperor and returned to Rome in 68 CE, Quintilian was in his retinue, though probably not as a close adviser. In Rome he embarked upon a career of teaching that would span two decades (*Inst.* 1 pr. 1). After the death of Galba, Quintilian attracted the attention of the Flavian dynasty. The new emperor Vespasian, though not especially well educated, shrewdly recognized the importance of fostering and controlling education (Woodside 1942, 126). To this end, and in an important advance in “educational policy,” he established in Rome official Chairs of Greek and Latin rhetoric at an annual salary of 100 000 *sestertii* paid from the imperial *fiscus* (Suet. *Vesp.* 18). Quintilian was the first appointee to the Latin chair. He retired after 20 odd years in this prestigious position, and it was during his retirement that he wrote the *Institutio Oratoria*, which was published around 95 CE. Sometime after he had begun this work, he was appointed tutor to Domitian’s two nephews who were, while they lived, his designated heirs (4 pr. 1). Through the agency of Flavius Clemens, the boys’ father, Quintilian was awarded the consular insignia, an immense honor capping a career that had enjoyed Flavian patronage at every stage (Coleman 1986, 3108–9).

Quintilian's career as a teacher and his reflection thereon is thought to be summed up by the *Institutio Oratoria*, a work which outlines the training of the perfect orator. While this is the principal concern of his magnum opus – and indeed of contemporary elite education – Quintilian acknowledges other areas of learning, including mathematics (“geometry”) and music, which was also taught in Rome, and could presumably be learned concurrently with the more standard fare (Clarke 1967, 26).

The *Institutio Oratoria*, which runs to 12 long books, begins with a humble declaration of reluctance in its preface (discussed in detail in CHAPTER 24, LATIN PROSE LITERATURE). Here Quintilian expresses his view that the work is not yet ready for publication; he has spent two years on the project, but his work has been interrupted by many distractions (*Inst.* 1 pr. 1). Moreover, in the *Ars Poetica* Horace had recommended that an author withhold publication of his work for nine years (1 pr. 2). Nevertheless, in response to the insistent pleas of the publisher Typho, he has reluctantly yielded, and offers a work that, whatever its imperfections, does not merely reiterate what others had said before (1 pr. 3).

Despite this initial gesture of authorial modesty, the *Institutio Oratoria* is a painstaking work that confronts its task with encyclopedic ambition, appropriating and adapting to the purpose of instruction the theories and principles expounded in the rhetorical treatises of Aristotle, Theophrastus, Cicero, Caecilius, and many others besides. It deals with the whole of rhetorical education, from its earliest beginnings in infancy to the final culmination in the perfect orator – and indeed beyond, for the *Institutio Oratoria* also offers advice on such matters as the appropriate time for the orator's retirement. Quintilian's “cradle to grave” approach thus combines the teachings of the elementary teacher and the rhetorician in a manner unique in surviving classical texts (though the practice probably goes back at least to Hellenistic teachers like Molon, who treated both grammar and rhetoric: see Kennedy 1969, 132).

It is easy to miss the importance of Quintilian's contribution to Roman educational theory and practice for his own and later ages. As Leddy (1953, 49) points out, the early imperial period was a time of some confusion, “with much conflict of opinion and controversy in educational matters, with no voice powerful enough to give direction to the dissatisfaction of the earnest student, and Quintilian must, even as a youth, have been acutely aware of the disordered state of thought in the field of rhetoric.” Quintilian himself supplied the powerful voice that was wanting: the *Institutio Oratoria* proved to be a major contribution to educational theory – and not just for the Flavian or even subsequent Roman periods, but throughout the Western tradition right up to the modern period (see CHAPTER 29, RECEPTION OF FLAVIAN LITERATURE, section 2.2).

The preface to the *Institutio Oratoria* sets out the plan for the whole opus. Quintilian assumes that the boy will get his elementary teaching at home, only leaving home when he goes to the grammar school, normally around the age of 11 or 12. The opening book thus deals with home training and other issues which are preliminary to the teaching of rhetoric proper. It begins with the first few years of the boy's life, ensuring that he learns both Greek and Latin (*Inst.* 1.1.12) and letters (1.1.24). Quintilian also discusses whether the subsequent education of the child should be private or public, opining that public schools offer no hindrance to education and are in fact to be preferred (1.2.17, 2.3.10). Memory must be cultivated (1.3.1) and literature, beginning with Greek, must be learned (1.4.2). Style (1.5) and orthography (1.7) are addressed, followed by reading,

which in antiquity is reading aloud (1.8). The second book lays out the primary exercises of the student of rhetoric (*prima apud rhetorem elementa*). All subsequent books, except the last, are concerned with the five topics that were the essential components of an elaborated rhetorical system (3.3.1): invention, arrangement (or disposition), style, memory, and delivery (or action). These are the *partes rhetoricae* familiar from Cicero (for example, *De Inventione* 1.7.9 *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio vel actio*). Quintilian regarded rhetoric as having already reached its full development, so that his task was not to invent new theories and techniques, but to evaluate and judiciously select from those already in existence.

At almost every turn Quintilian reminds us of the necessary prerequisites, of the difficulties and challenges of his daunting pedagogical project. He also calls attention to the intricacies of the teacher's task. He sounds decidedly realistic notes when he reprimands boring instructors of rhetoric (*Inst.* 2.4.8), or chastises teachers who drag out rhetoric education beyond the necessary time in order to gain extra fees (12.12.14). His brief reminiscences on his own training in a Latin rhetorical school offer an invaluable glimpse into the Roman classroom, which seems to have manifested the same spirit of competition found in many of its modern counterparts. He reports that the students were divided into classes, and were given regular tests of progress. When made to declaim, the order was determined by merit, from most to least competent. To be "top of the class" was a status coveted by every ambitious student, and as rankings were revised on a periodic basis, the top student had to keep working to retain his place, while rivals were driven by the hope of displacing him (1.2.23–5).

There are, to be sure, some suggestive caveats about the final product of the oratorical education that Quintilian advocates. These include the observation that the fruits of rhetorical training – which is naturally tailored to elite contexts – may not prove effective with undiscerning audiences. Quintilian observes that the untrained speaker is often perceived by the ignorant as being more vigorous than his polished counterpart, who is more moderate and refined (*Inst.* 2.12.9–12). The untrained speaker may seem to exhibit freedom of speech, when in fact he is being abusive; he may seem courageous when he is being rash, or abundant when he is being prodigal (2.12.5). Quintilian's broader thrust here is "to demonstrate the value of a systematic study of rhetoric, as against those who believe in nothing but natural powers and practice" (Wilkins 1905, 81–2). In such discussions one can perhaps detect what Connolly has identified as the new importance of rhetorical education as "gatekeeper" in elite society (cited in Gowing 2005, 108).

The education of the orator as envisioned by Quintilian is comprehensive in its scope and ambition, but there is a further caveat: the mastery of technical rules will be in vain if the student lacks natural talent (*ingenium*, *Inst.* 1 pr. 26). Its laborious and exhaustive detail notwithstanding, the *Institutio Oratoria* can only fulfill its purpose if the student has the requisite natural endowments – not just a strong intellect, but also a good voice and strong lungs, sound health, endurance and grace (1 pr. 27). Once again, this proviso is broadly in keeping with the elitism of Quintilian's magnum opus. The daunting challenges on the other side of the pedagogical project are also acknowledged. Quintilian cautions that some who have written textbooks on rhetoric with scrupulous care are nonetheless far removed from true eloquence (8 pr. 3); he presumably means to exempt himself from this group. And a textbook on rhetoric is no guarantee of rhetoric learned:

earlier, at 2.13.15, Quintilian had warned that mastering one small text does not amount to completion of an education in rhetoric.

Strategies of breadth and depth also come into play. The prologue to Book 8 suggests that the beginner might require a simpler introduction before engaging with the full complexity of the more advanced material. To be sure, invention and disposition, which are treated in great detail in Books 3 to 7, are essential to composing a good speech. But a beginner should initially undertake a simpler and briefer course of study (*Inst.* 8 pr. 1). Indeed, beginners should be deterred from the full outlay – lest they lose heart at such an undertaking or lest, having managed to take in the details, they regard themselves as able orators (8 pr. 2).

As already noted, the ancients recognized five essential tasks to be undertaken by the speaker in all forms of oratory: (i) *inventio*, the devising of subject matter; (ii) *dispositio*, the arrangement of that matter; (iii) *elocutio*, the formulation of the matter in appropriate language; (iv) *memoria*, the committing to memory of the arguments, their arrangement and formulation; (v) *pronuntiatio*, the delivery, including both the modulation of the voice and physical gestures. Fully half of the *Institutio Oratoria* addresses the first three tasks: Books 4–6 deal with *inventio*, Book 7 *dispositio*, and Books 8–9 focus on style, including tropes (σχήματα) and figures of speech.

Book 10 momentarily interrupts this sequence. It begins with the acknowledgment that formal training is not in itself enough to ensure rhetorical power: the student must also acquire a broader facility that in Greek is termed ἔξις (*Inst.* 10.1.1); he must have an abundant supply of words and material (10.1.5) and this is achieved by imitating various authors, both Greek and Latin, which the succeeding chapters set out. Book 10 thus becomes a review of ancient literature from the point of view of an orator – making it a seminal instance of literary criticism (and one that continues to attract the attention of modern students and scholars). In Book 11 Quintilian returns to and completes the schema by addressing adaptation, memory and delivery.

Book 12 addresses what the author regards as his weightiest topic, namely the moral requisites of oratory – or, put more simply, what sort of man the orator should be. Quintilian restates from the preface his insistence on the orator's moral qualities (*Inst.* 12.1.1, 12.1.3–19 passim, 12.1.33). His ideal orator must be not merely skilled in speaking, but also upstanding: he must be “a good man skilled in speaking” (*vir bonus peritus dicendi*, 12.1.1, etc.). In this Quintilian follows earlier Roman authors, including the stern Republican statesman Marcus Porcius Cato (Cato the Elder). The latter had written: *Orator est ... vir bonus dicendi peritus* (An orator ... is a good man skilled in speaking) – a statement that the Elder Seneca cites at *Controv.* 1 pr. 9. It seems clear from these references that Quintilian's ideal orator is a widely accepted Roman ideal. The *vir bonus* (good man) is ultimately someone who can fulfill the role of an elite citizen, meet the demands of private and public life, guide the state as a counselor, as a legislator and in a judicial role (1 pr. 11). Attention must therefore be given to the formation of moral character (12.2.1) and to knowledge of civil law, custom and religion (12.3.1). Noteworthy here is the implicit rejection of philosophy, its exclusion from those positive influences that play a guiding role in the formation of moral character.

Quintilian's subject was rhetoric, which had long been a preeminent Roman pedagogical concern. Like other writers, he manifests a guardedness vis-à-vis philosophy that is characteristically Roman. So for example, Tacitus' father-in-law Agricola is reported by

the historian to have been nearly led astray in his youth by an excessive and un-Roman interest in philosophy (*studium philosophiae acrius ultraque quam concessum Romano*, Tac. *Agr.* 4), the curtailment of which required firm maternal intervention. For Quintilian, philosophy was not an end in itself, but a subordinate discipline, best regarded as the servant of rhetoric (though in truth the boundary between the two was not always easily identified). As instances of the usefulness of philosophy to the orator, Quintilian adduces Anaxagoras' influence on Pericles and Plato's on Demosthenes (*Inst.* 12.2.22). Some scholars have attributed the broadly unflattering treatment of philosophy and philosophers in the *Institutio Oratoria* to Quintilian's loyalty to his Flavian patrons, a dynasty that had something of a habit of expelling philosophers from Rome (see Clarke 1967, 36). This no doubt played an important role, but Quintilian's distrust of philosophy was probably genuine enough. He clearly took exception to its practitioners' claim to a monopoly on ethics and wisdom, to say nothing of individual instances of hypocrisy (Leddy 1953, 52). "Philosophy," Quintilian observes piercingly, "can be simulated, eloquence cannot" (*philosophia enim simulari potest, eloquentia non potest*, 12.2.23). As Kennedy (1969, 135) points out, this is not merely a case of Quintilian opposing what his imperial patrons opposed; for here the *Institutio Oratoria* determinedly resurrects from the rhetorical tradition an ideal that was a counterpoise to the lofty notion of the philosopher. That ideal is the orator committed to and engaged in the service of the state, the *vir bonus dicendi peritus*.

Quintilian came to be regarded as *the* Roman teacher of rhetoric; in the Flavian Age he was no doubt the best-known teacher of Rome (Kennedy 1969, 133). But rhetoric was not just a Roman discipline, and it was not just practiced in Latin; it was also, and indeed more fundamentally, Greek. In fact, it was originally Greek (*Inst.* 2.14.2), and Quintilian concedes much ground to the Greek achievement:

Non possumus esse tam graciles: simus fortiores. subtilitate vincimur: valeamus pondere.
Proprietas penes illos est certior: copia vincamus.

Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.36

We cannot be so graceful [sc. as the Greeks]: let us be more vigorous. We are defeated in subtlety: let us prevail in weight. They have the greater precision: let us outdo them in fullness of expression.

tr. Leddy

Odgers (1935, 31) concludes from such passages that Quintilian regarded Greek rhetoricians as superior to their Roman counterparts and preferred their terminology. It may rather be, though, that he simply recognized that the Latin language was so different from Greek that it was impossible to apply the same canons of "good style" to both (Leddy 1953, 55, further suggesting that Quintilian may have been the first seriously to compare the two languages in this regard). It is certainly the case that the basis for his theories derives less from the authority of Greek writers than from nature, reason, and his own experience (*Inst.* 6.2.25). Be that as it may, in his discussion of terminology Quintilian observes that it is not always possible to translate Greek terms into Latin (2.14.2). This, of course, was no impediment to the target audience; Quintilian had earlier recommended that students begin by learning Greek at a very early age (1.1.12), and he makes translation from Greek into Latin an integral part of his curriculum (10.5.2). Interestingly,

following 2.14 the *Institutio Oratoria* consciously inserts Greek equivalents for Latin terms so that perversion of art is κακοτεχνία (2.15.2), power is δύναμις (2.15.4), and so on. It is here, I would suggest, that the author affirms the essentially bilingual character of elite Roman culture, a reality evident in such developments as the establishment of Greek as well as Latin libraries at Rome (Plin. *NH* 36.23–4, 25, 33–4). The *Institutio Oratoria* thus makes clear that, in accordance with widespread upper class practices and pretensions, to be Roman was to be more than Latinate.

2 Plutarch

Quintilian's close proximity to the Roman cultural and political center is the result of his cooption and integration into an evolving Roman educational "system" and the imperial power structures that underwrote it. Quintilian was a product of the Romanized West; a number of his contemporaries from the Greek East had a somewhat more distanced and reticent relationship with Rome and *Romanitas*. Their discourses and educational practices often privileged the classical past and championed Hellenic cultural autonomy – as a counterweight, some have argued, to Roman political power (Swain 1996; Vasunia 2003). This naturally resulted in rather different pedagogical principles and priorities, some of which cast into doubt any unquestioning allegiance to Rome and its ideals. In fact, whereas the educated Roman was fervently bilingual, the educated Greek, as Swain (1996, 41) has observed, tended to resist Latin since it was felt to contaminate his native tongue.

One such figure is Plutarch (46–120 CE). Born of a wealthy family in Chaeronea, Boeotia, he became a Roman citizen and held public office, perhaps becoming procurator of Achaia. Plutarch was without question one of the most important Greek writers in the Flavian and early Antonine periods (see CHAPTER 25, FLAVIAN GREEK LITERATURE, section 1). He also "stands almost alone among Greeks of the Roman Empire in displaying in his works an extensive knowledge of, and interest in, Rome and Romans," making him "a unique bridge between Greece and Rome" (Swain 1990, 126).

Education is an important and recurring theme in Plutarch's corpus. In the *Parallel Lives*, a series of matching biographies of celebrated Greeks and Romans, his subject's education is often dealt with in early chapters, as well as being linked to virtuous behavior – or lack thereof – in later life (Duff 2008, 1). Three of the shorter works in the *Moralia* deal directly with the topic of education: *De liberis educandis*, *Instituta Laconica*, and *De auditu*. From these brief treatises we are able to glimpse an educational world fundamentally different from its Roman counterpart.

De liberis educandis (On the Education of Children) is considered spurious by many modern editors, but issues of authorship need not detain us here. What matters is the "Plutarchan" emphasis on the child's early education and environment as playing a decisive role in the formation of adult character (ἦθος), a pedagogical theory informing many individual works of the *Moralia*, as well as the insistent Greek character and pedagogical principles of the text. *De liberis educandis* is conspicuously populated by Greeks of an earlier age, including Phoenix, the attendant of Achilles (4B), Aristippus (4F), Stilpo, philosopher of Megara (6A), Pericles (8B), Demosthenes (6D), Democritus (10A), Socrates (4C, 10C, 11E), Plato (5F, 8D, 10E–F), and Pythagoras (12E). Pride of

place, then, is given to famous Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, and particularly Athenians (although there is a reference to the Alexandrian monarch Ptolemy Philadelphus at 11A). By this choice, with its exclusion of Roman figures and points of reference, Plutarch (if it be he) seems to engage in an implicit critique of present circumstances, in which the Greek world is dominated by Roman power.

As with Quintilian's magnum opus, the specific brief of *De liberis educandis* is the education of freeborn children, and elite children in particular (1A). But whereas Quintilian's focus throughout the *Institutio Oratoria* is rhetoric, *De liberis educandis* manifests a concern for education in a much broader sense. For the Greeks this included athletics, music, literature and, above all, philosophy. The author is concerned to ensure that children develop moral excellence, to which nature, reason and habit necessarily contribute (2A). As already noted, the earliest years are seen as crucial for the formation of character: whence the insistence that children be nurtured by their mothers (5), and that their teachers be free from scandal (4C). In later stages, the young are to be kept away from base individuals (12D), especially flatterers (13A) whom Isocrates and Xenophon excoriate (for example, Isocrates *Against the Sophists* 191; *Antidosis* 46; *Panathenaicus* 1–2). Sounding a more chauvinistic note, the author recommends that only Greek slaves be appointed to care for the children, especially in infancy, in order to ensure that they speak Greek and are not “contaminated by barbarians” (ἵνα μὴ συναναχρῶνόμενοι βαρβάροις, 6). Emphasis is placed on the father as an example for his son (14A), following the Greek model of education that had prevailed since Homer rather than the Roman model; in the latter case, the father is the disciplinarian, rather than the model, of his family. Education and training are seen as paramount in achieving the goal of moral excellence (5C); and mental learning takes pride of place: the mind is the overriding concern, dwarfing in importance bodily strength and physical prowess (5E). The author turns the student away from public discourse at 6B, by which I think he means the discourse of personal lawsuits that Isocrates had decried (cf. Isocrates *Against the Sophists* 9 and 19). Pride of place in the pedagogical scheme is given to philosophy (7C). Indeed, *De liberis educandis* strikes a characteristically Greek note in affirming that a knowledge of philosophy is the ultimate goal of education. This contrasts sharply with Quintilian's devaluation of philosophy, as discussed in the previous section of this chapter. In another work included in the *Moralia*, Plutarch identifies the study of poetry as the crucial preliminary to that of philosophy (*De audiendis poetis* 37B).

If *De liberis educandis* insists that children be raised and educated in a fully “Greek” manner, a rather different “Greek” manner is put on display in another work of the *Moralia*, the *Instituta Laconica* (The Ancient Customs of the Spartans). This deeply nostalgic work details the principles of Spartan education in the Classical period when Sparta was a leading city. It was, to be sure, never the cultural center that Athens was, nor that Rome was in its way; but its strict system of education continued to fascinate commentators (and indeed philosophers) throughout antiquity. Traditional Spartan education, as recounted in this work, was foremost a training of the body and of the self in obedience to those in authority, in accordance with principles established by Lycurgus, Sparta's legendary lawgiver. The author notes that the Spartans learned to read and to write only for practical reasons. Their education was aimed at obedience, at enduring hardship and victory in battle (237A). The Spartans shunned performances of both comedies and tragedies, lest they hear anyone speak against the laws (239B). They were,

however, more favorably disposed towards music and songs inasmuch as these could be an impetus towards pride (238A) and courage in war (238B). The *Instituta Laconica* details ritual punishments that young Spartan men had to endure for wrongdoing, including continuously circling an altar while reciting lines composed as self-reprehension (237D) and a starvation diet (237F), as well as ritual acts of bravery and endurance, including suffering flagellation almost to the point of death (239D).

Plutarch concludes the *Instituta Laconica* by noting that Sparta was the leading city in Greece as long as it remained true to the laws of Lycurgus. Slowly, however, Spartans began to transgress the oaths and laws and sought wealth so that over time they lapsed incrementally from that high standard. They became few in number due to their constant warring during the period of Macedonian dominance. Returning to his own present, Plutarch observes that the Spartans are now subject to Roman rule, as are the other Greeks (240B). This conclusion amounts to a critique of the Spartans for being instrumental in their own decline, but one senses as well resentment towards the Romans as rulers of a “decadent” Greece. Writing nostalgically about a lapsed form of Greek education thus becomes a way of privileging the classical past and championing an ideal of Hellenic political and cultural autonomy.

Another work of Plutarch that creates a sense of education taking place in an almost exclusively Greek world is *De auditu* (On Listening, also called *De auditione philosophorum*, On Listening to Philosophers, and *De recta audiendi ratione*, On the Right Way of Listening). This was initially delivered as a formal lecture, and then written out for the benefit of Nicander, a young man who, we are told, has just assumed the *toga virilis*. Nicander is thus, Plutarch declares, free of authority (37C). This is, of course, a specifically Greek cultural perspective: a Roman male of Nicander’s age would still be under the authority of his father, the *paterfamilias*. But the immediate point is pedagogical authority: Plutarch addresses Nicander directly because he is now ready to accept advice directly rather than through a mentor figure. Nicander is, crucially, about to embark on the study of philosophy. This sounds a characteristically Greek note, for, as already observed, Greeks regarded philosophy as the final goal of elite education. The contrast with Roman practice is especially sharp for the Flavian period, in which, as we have seen, philosophy was relegated to a secondary status by Quintilian. Nicander is warned of potential pitfalls to his philosophical training – above all the danger of being seduced by the “theatrical and spectacular subject matter” of sophist-charlatans (41F–42A, with Xenophontos 2013, 7–8).

The speech is populated exclusively by figures from the Hellenic past, including Herodotus on the modesty of young men (37D), Theophrastus on the art of hearing (38A), Xenocrates also on hearing (38B) and in 47E, Bias on his action in performing a sacrifice (38B), Plato for a quotation (40D) and for his appropriate response to lectures (45F), Lysias for one of his speeches (40E) and for his style (42D), Heracleitus for a saying on fools (41A and also in 43D, Ariston (42B), Philotimus the physician (43B), Archilocus, Parmenides, and Phocylides (47E), Euripides and Sophocles (45B), Epicurus on disruption in lecture rooms (45F), Socrates and Hypereides on responding to lectures (45F) and Cleanthes (47E). Plutarch makes no reference to Roman authors or thinkers. The effect is powerfully and nostalgically to evoke an idealized Greek past: the reader is, as it were, transported to Classical Athens and its environs.

The achievements of Hellenic culture and education occupy a central position in Plutarch's thought (Swain 1990, 128). In giving such primacy to *Greek* education, he "reflects the important role that *paideia* (education, culture) played in the way members of the Greek elites defined themselves in the late first century" (Duff 2008, 2). What is most striking about *De auditu* is its insistent privileging of Greek educational principles and Greek intellectuality. This seems to constitute an implicit rejection of Latin culture and *mores*: there is no mention of Cato or even Cicero, who was after all also a philosopher as well as being a rhetorician and statesman, but whose education Plutarch criticizes in his parallel life Demosthenes and Cicero (Swain 1996, 143). After its initial Roman point of reference – the *toga virilis* – *De auditu* sets about the construction of a prior Hellenic world within the Roman universe. This raises a question as to how to read 37^{E–F}, where Plutarch observes that newly naturalized citizens have problems with many of the things that are done and are dissatisfied with them, while those resident aliens who are brought up under *our* laws have no problem accepting what befalls them. Who are these newly naturalized citizens, one might ask? Are they individuals who have just gained Roman citizenship? Are they individuals who have recently assumed the Greek way of life? Or are they individuals who have just become acquainted with philosophy, as the address to Nicander might suggest? The uncertainty of these lines of *De auditu* is perhaps appropriate for a Greek text written by a Greek author who has acquired Roman citizenship – but without a deep conviction, one senses, that he is Roman.

3 Dio of Prusa

The third author I wish to consider is Dio Chrysostom (circa 40–120 CE), also known as Dio Cocceianus, who was a leading citizen of Prusa, a modest town in Bithynia. He was prominent in local politics – a number of his 80 surviving speeches were delivered to the town assembly – and was elected chief magistrate of Prusa, among other honors. Dio was an accomplished orator (whence the name Chrysostom, meaning golden mouthed), as well as a philosopher, and is regarded as one of the first representatives of the so-called Second Sophistic. Dio was also active in Rome for some years: he moved there in the reign of Vespasian and remained until 82 CE, when he was banished from Italy (and Prusa) by Domitian, probably for unsavory political associations: his patron Flavius Sabinus was exiled the same year (Berry 1983, 71). During his banishment Dio traveled far and wide in the Greek East, presenting himself as a Cynic philosopher – despite the fact that he had studied under the Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus, and that his philosophical approach was eclectic, with no definitive allegiance to any single school. He returned to Rome after the death of Domitian in 96 CE and received Roman citizenship under Nerva, whose full name was Marcus Cocceius Nerva (whence the *nomen* Cocceianus). He eventually retired in Bithynia. Dio thus has an intriguing career as a Greek who achieved a noteworthy position both in his own Hellenic culture and at Rome. While in Prusa, he was that town's principal intermediary with the provincial governor, and when the emperor resolved to rebuild parts of Prusa, Dio was again the local liaison (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 47.13, with Barry 1993, 84–5). This in-between status is well illustrated in a speech in which he makes use of a suggestive educational simile to

warn his townsmen against provoking the unwanted intervention of the Roman authorities through poor local governance:

Nothing that goes on in the cities escapes the notice of the proconsuls; on the contrary, just as relatives of children who have been naughty at home report them to their teachers, so the misbehavior of communities is reported to the proconsuls.

Dio Chrys. *Or.* 46.14

Dio treats different aspects of education in several of his speeches. *Oration* 18 (On Training for Public Speaking) deals with rhetorical instruction for young men, a topic that, as we have seen, was exhaustively treated by Quintilian in the *Institutio Oratoria*. As with Quintilian in his tenth book, so Dio is concerned with identifying authors who are particularly useful to the student of rhetoric – but he differs from his Roman counterpart in naming only Greek rather than Greek and Latin authors. This insularity, characteristic of the period, is no doubt conditioned by a sense of the superiority of the Greek cultural heritage, as well the concomitant reality that bilingualism was less widespread among the Greek than the Roman elite. Dio is adamant that the speaker does not require laborious training, and suggests some pleasure is necessary for the learner (*Or.* 18.5). He recommends reading comedy, especially Menander because of his adeptness in character portrayal (7). The student is also referred to tragedy – Euripides in particular, because of the wealth of characters and moving incidents in his plays (7). Valuable also are the epics of Homer, which are relevant to an individual at every stage in his life, and lyric and elegiac poetry (8). History is appropriate for the man who chooses to work in public life (9), with Herodotus recommended for enjoyment and Thucydides as being of the first rank (10). The orators of course are recommended, particularly for the student who is to become a public speaker: Demosthenes for the vigor of his style, and Lysias for his brevity and simplicity, amongst other qualities. Hypereides, Aeschines, and Lycurgus also have qualities worthy of note (11). Dio also recommends acquaintance with contemporary orators, such as Antipater, Theodorus, Plution, and Conon, so that the speaker can compare himself with them and possibly find himself better than they are (12).

Dio turns finally to the Socratics, commending Xenophon above all as fulfilling all the requirements of public life (*Or.* 18.15). His ideas are clear and his narrative style is pleasing and persuasive. What makes Xenophon especially valuable is that he has done what he writes about, so that his speeches are true to life (17). If one is to write invented school exercises, it is Xenophon whom Dio recommends to the student (18).

As with the works of Plutarch discussed in the section 2 of this chapter, so Dio nostalgically evokes a Hellenic world of the past for his audience, conspicuously ignoring the Roman world around him. In *Oration* 55 (On Homer and Socrates) he makes the point that one can be the student of a teacher one has never seen, as in the case of Socrates being a pupil of Homer (*Or.* 55.3). And both the poet and the philosopher have certain resemblances: neither was boastful or brash but they were modest (7–8); neither sought wealth, and both were concerned with moral issues (9). Here as often in Dio's *Orations*, the Roman world is simply ignored; but this is not always the case in his work.

Dio's own philosophical training and inclinations are, as we have seen, characteristically "Greek" in the Flavian period. As a member of the economic and political elite of the Greek East, he had himself benefited from the usual education that that group

enjoyed; he nonetheless found it wanting. *Oration 13* (In Athens, about his Banishment) is a work that Dio wrote shortly after his banishment by Domitian. He begins by declaring that exile is not such a bad thing, and then launches into a critique of contemporary education, invoking, as both premise and authority, Socrates speaking to a group of people at Athens about education. Dio's Socrates asserts that such talents as playing the lyre, reading and writing, being a gymnastic master, or even a knowledgeable schoolmaster, contribute little to the sound governance of a city (*Or.* 13.17). That the Athenians were not receiving a useful education at the time (26) is demonstrated by the fact that they were unable to overcome their Persian enemy (23, 25). Socrates goes on to declare that to be uneducated and to know nothing of life's essentials is equally unsatisfactory; philosophy is what must be learned (27–8). Dio takes up the Socratic message, even though it seems old-fashioned (29), and then makes a surprising shift in his frame of reference, transferring the message to the imperial city from which he had recently been banished – Rome. He derides the luxury and intemperance of the empire's capital, declaring this to be a symptom of the inadequacy of Roman education (29). A sound education, he asserts, ensures happiness (31), and it does not matter whether those being educated are Greeks or Romans, or if the teachers are Scythian or Indian (32). Indeed, the ideal teacher could rid society of vice (32), diminishing the importance of silver and gold, ivory and amber, crystal, ebony, women's adornments and dyes – all of which were, of course, highly valued at Rome (34). With proper education extravagance would diminish, so that the Romans, becoming more enlightened, would opt for smaller houses and fewer slaves (35).

The speech ends suddenly after section 37. Though many of Dio's orations are apparently incomplete, this is perhaps a deliberate effect. Dio has delivered his message, a criticism of conventional education, especially at Rome, using Socrates as his mouthpiece. He excoriates contemporary vice and suggests that Roman society is being undermined by it; he extolls virtue and the benefits it brings the community through philosophy. The occasion of his exile has thus provided Dio with an opportunity to criticize Rome through what he diagnoses as its fundamental weakness – its educational system.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered three authors, Quintilian, Plutarch, and Dio of Prusa, on the topic of education in the Flavian period. It is important that none of these writers were themselves originally Roman or Italian but came from other regions of the empire. There is a clear Roman–Greek divide: the “Romanized” Quintilian is preoccupied with rhetorical education in the *Institutio Oratoria*, whereas Plutarch and Dio emphasize philosophy as the culmination of education. There are also hints of a center–periphery split between Quintilian and Plutarch. Dio was in important respects an intermediate figure, who had a foot in both worlds, and who consequently felt authorized explicitly to address the failings of not only Greek but also Roman contemporary education. In the Flavian period, education was a topic around which issues of cultural identity and authority coalesced. For those on the imperial periphery, such as Plutarch and Dio, discussing education could at times be a pretext for constructing one's cultural identity, as well as for writing, whether directly or indirectly, about a relationship to Rome.

NOTE

- 1 As Clarke (1967, 24) points out, Quintilian's status as a native rather than a Roman settler is suggested both by the fact that Calagurris was a *municipium* rather than a *colonia* and by the *nomen* Fabius (his full Roman name was Marcus Fabius Quintilianus), since it was common for Romanized provincials to take the name of a Roman benefactor, and the Fabii had a long-standing connection with Spain.

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FURTHER READING

Wilkins (1905) remains a useful starting point for those wishing to acquaint themselves with education in the Roman world. A more up-to-date treatment of upper class Roman education can be found in Morgan (1998), which stresses continuity with the Hellenistic period, but affords Quintilian due attention. Clarke (1967) and Kennedy (1969) provide helpful introductions to Quintilian and his achievement. Duff (2008) offers a clear exposition of Plutarch's model of education as manifested in various famous figures, both Greek and Roman, in the *Parallel Lives*. Berry (1983) gives a good account of Dio's career and his pedagogical agenda.

CHAPTER 18

Flavian Pompeii: Restoration and Renewal

Eleanor Winsor Leach

1 Between earthquake and eruption

Disasters test political leaders. For better or worse, experiences of the early twenty-first century have reinforced this point. With the world watching, a responsible official will often rush to the spot, or undertake recuperative programs for the longer term. Thus, according to Cassius Dio, the emperor Titus responded to the catastrophic eruption of Vesuvius by attending in person to disaster recovery in Campania (Cass. Dio 66.24; see also Pesando 2009). The mission, unfortunately, did not turn out well for him because during his absence came the great fire that destroyed large portions of the city (his brother Domitian would take advantage of the building opportunities arising from this disaster). Still, Titus did not turn his back on the stricken Campanian cities, according to Dio, but appointed two ex-consuls to supervise the restoration of the region and gave its inhabitants not only gifts or money – and this, Dio notes, came from his own personal resources rather than from public treasuries (66.24) – but also the property of such as had lost their lives and had no heirs.

How reliable is this information? Whatever the sources upon which Dio was drawing, his account of the eruption of 79 probably has some factuality amid its rather lurid details. The fire-cloud that came with ash in the third wave of the eruption corresponds to the pyroclastic surge whose layering with lapilli can be seen in the cuts outside the Vesuvius Gate (De Carolis and Patricelli 2003). That the entire population was seated in the theater (Cass. Dio 66.21–3) is improbable in view of the distribution of corpses throughout the city, although the idea did appeal to Bulwer-Lytton who, in his novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), put them into the amphitheater for a decadence effect.

But money to fund the recovery of property seems quite likely as an explanation for the evidence of post-eruption scavenging in the forum and some houses that carried off large amounts of the marble veneering attached to walls, statues from their forum bases and untold objects of value (Descoudres 1993). For this reason we cannot be certain of

the extent of post-earthquake restoration in Flavian Pompeii in the years leading up to Vesuvius' eruption. With no other written mention of such campaigns we have no idea how long they lasted or what became of rescued objects, but within another generation the sites would seem to have passed out of memory. When Domitian built his Campanian roadway linking the Appia with parts south he concentrated on the area above Naples.

But Vespasian and Titus had never been obtuse to the problems of Pompeii as several tributary inscriptions bear witness (Nonnis 2009). Their attention was in response to the severe earthquake of 62 CE, corroborated by Seneca the Younger (*QNat.* 6.1–31), many of whose effects were still being remedied when Vespasian came to power. In keeping with Suetonius' brief notice (*Vesp.* 17) that Vespasian gave aid to cities that had suffered from earthquakes, an inscription posted outside the *palaestra* (exercise area) in Herculaneum documents his restoration of a temple of Magna Mater that the earthquake had destroyed. We do not know the location of this temple, but its significance is the connection between Magna Mater in Rome with her Trojan associations and its testimony to the existence of an official cult of the goddess at Herculaneum as well as other areas of Campania. Likewise in the area of the Herculanean basilica was an honorary dedication to Flavia Domitilla, either wife or daughter Vespasian (Nonnis 2009).

At Pompeii, Vespasian's post-earthquake intervention, like Titus' later post-eruption intervention, was vicarious, but one aspect of it is well documented by four almost identical postings discovered at distances of about 30 m from each of the four main gates of the city. These record that the emperor sent T. Suedius Clemens, endowed with tribunician authority, with the mandate to restore public places that had been illegally appropriated for private use (*loca publica a privatis possessa ... rei publicae Pompeianorum restituit*, *CIL* 10.1018; see Franklin 2001; Pesando 2009). Among Vespasian's various gestures toward post-earthquake restoration this is the best known, both for its interest within the context of historical administration, but also for its implication that the Pompeii of the seismic 60s was characterized by a hectic and apparently little supervised activity of reconstruction. If in fact this appointment seems to have occurred not only at several years' distance from the recorded seismic strike of 62, but also from Vespasian's accession, we should remember what more and more scholars are coming to acknowledge, that there was not simply one big quake but a continuing series of seismic events that created a continuing need for reconstruction (Allison 1994).

Although it is uncertain on whose initiative – whether that of the town council or the emperor – the appointment was made, the recourse to an official of quasi-military rank might not have been a new thing to the Pompeians. During the Augustan period one M. Holconius Rufus had held the office of *tribunus militum a populo* (a senior legionary officer appointed by popular assembly), whose primary function was that of securing rapprochement between Roman government and the local elite (Franklin 2001) an honor that allowed him to appear, in statuary form at least, wearing an Augustan sort of cuirass. Having become a major benefactor, Holconius would seem to have carried out his office in style, as his inscription within the renovated large theater testifies; but still, he was born into a Pompeian family, while Suedius was an outsider.

How well Suedius was suited to gain the goodwill of the citizenry might indeed be doubted if we look at his biography, for, thanks to information from inscriptions and from Tacitus, we know quite a bit about his career trajectory, and even perhaps his personality (Pesando 2009). He came up from a military background. During the years

63–68 he was a centurion with *x Gemina* at Carnuntum on the northern *limes*. In 69, he was quite heavily involved on the side of the Othonians, being one of the commanders of the fleet sent to attack the Vitellians and assail Narbonese Gaul, whence comes Tacitus' profile. Of the three commanders one was captured, the second lacked authority and Suedius exercised command in an ambitious manner, but proved to be as weak in maintaining discipline, as he was greedy for battles (Tac. *Hist.* 2.12).

So for better or worse, Suedius is deputed to Pompeii, and here begins my organizational premise. Although the totality of his activity is unrecorded, one sign of his presence are the several electoral *programmata* (endorsements) supporting the candidacy of M. Epidius Sabinus for the duumvirate, a municipal counterpart to a consul at Rome. Although we cannot be certain of Suedius' arrival date, the *programmata* themselves give *termini ante* and *post quem*. In 74 when Epidius ran successfully for aedile, Suedius is not mentioned, but he is chief sponsor for 77 (Franklin 2001). Given his dubious diplomatic skills, perhaps he could use a companion to show him around and assist with local ingratiating. So let us imagine Epidius coming to meet the new arrival at a city gate to introduce him to the layout of the city. This native can serve as our guide to clue us into some developments of the 70s and point out some marks and landmarks of Flavian Pompeii.

2 First impressions

Having come down from Naples by boat, Suedius is ready for a bath. The best place to stop says Epidius is right here, outside the Porta Marina (one of the four main gates of the city), at a privately run bathing establishment and something to see at that. Indeed the monumental entrance room is spectacular, although somewhat retro-Neronian with its lofty water stair paneled with mosaics. But the deep cold pools are frescoed with images of sea-creatures, *naumachiae* (naval battle scenes), and even a Venus, so that a swimmer could imagine himself in the ocean itself. Nevertheless, with a more conventional *frigidarium* further inside, these pools are evidently for show, rather than swimming. Considerable restoration is in progress here, and the place for its own reasons is on Suedius' list. He has been ordered to check out the dressing room, which everyone comes to see, where instead of putting your clothes in a cubbyhole, you pick a box with a number that matches one of the sex scenes pictured above (Jacobelli 1995). But where are they now? Not to worry, the bath attendant assures him; they have been painted over, being just too indecent to be seen by anyone coming down from Rome, where this current emperor wants public morals improved. With Suedius' first charge so easily satisfied, up he and Epidius go through the long gateway tunnel toward the Forum.

Immediately the visitor can see that the *capitolium* has still not been rebuilt from the earthquake. This seems surprising, but the temple was certainly hard hit. Epidius mentions a little story-telling relief panel commissioned in the house of the banker, Caecilius Iucundus, who once handled most of the big loan transactions in the *colonia*. All this stopped, however, because poor Caecilius died from his injuries in the earthquake. So the relief shows the temple shaking on the way to its eventual facade collapse. Reconstruction has to be a very expensive project, especially to match the new stylishness exhibited by other rebuilt structures, particularly on the eastern side, which we might



Fig. 18.1 Pompeian Forum, east side. Temple of the Genius Augusti. Photograph by author

call “imperial,” where private individuals had begun to fund buildings from Augustan times onwards. Right in the center is the Temple of the Genius Augusti, the imperial cult temple, (see Fig. 18.1). Every municipality needs one, of course, but its presence is also a tribute to the emperor’s recognition of Pompeii. In front of the temple steps a very fine marble altar shows a sacrifice in performance. Does the sacrificer have Vespasian’s face? (see Fig. 18.2) One cannot be certain because both temple and altar, Epidius explains, date back to the Augustan period (Dobbins 1992; Franklin 2001); this and the large building next door were constructed with a party wall by two aristocratic ladies of the best families, who held major priesthoods. Both this one, Mamia, and her counterpart, Eumachia, have very nice circular bench monuments just outside the Herculaneum Gate; a way of becoming a perpetual benefactor of one’s fellow citizens. Now the temple has been rededicated in honor of Vespasian. The altar has been repaired in places, and all the walls are revetted in marble, as are also the two buildings on either side.

Walking further toward Vesuvius on the north we pass by innumerable statues on their bases, and come to the *macellum* (market) a good example of the kind of upscale decoration that post-earthquake rebuilding has produced. Immediately one notices the two fine new Corinthian columns flanking the entrance, but the interior shows the same luxurious grade of finish. On a raised platform at the far end we see three veneered rooms. The deep central space houses statues of four local dignitaries with a big imperial statue at the back. The dress of the lady shows that she is a priestess, her hair is curled in



Fig. 18.2 Pompeian Forum. Temple of the Genius Augusti. Altar with sacrifice in progress. Photograph by author

the latest fashion. Does she look like Vespasian's niece Julia? Indeed she does seem to, but perhaps like many ladies in high society she has adopted the imperial style. What goes on in the central tholos? One might know from the smell. Just as in Varro's old Menippean the "Bi-Marcus," this is where the cooks gather to buy their fish. Watch the pavement, don't slip on the scales that they are always scattering in every which direction. If you cross over to the porticus, you can see a whole painted frieze of fish above the mythological subject panels.

Still with Vespasian in mind, Epidius points out two recent inscriptions, a double announcement of two civic donations, posted by Cn. Nigidius Alleius Maius, a prominent elder citizen. One is an altar honoring Vespasian. Could this, Suedius asks, be the

restored marble altar we just saw in the Temple of the Emperor's Genius (Genius Augusti)? The other is a big amphitheatrical show. Not surprising from Nigidius who may well be the most successful Pompeian of all time, but not least for his ability to bide time and make a comeback (Franklin 1997). Already at the beginning of Nero's reign he had been quinquennial *duumvir*; at this career climax he was a big donor of games even when they were nothing but animal hunts. His was quite a family too. Although the Nigidii are a little obscure in origin, perhaps with a Capuan connection, the Allei, his adoptive family, were one of the best, the kind of persons who were buried at public expense in those bench-type tombs decreed by the decurions. Alleius' daughter has the honor of serving as a priestess of Ceres and Venus. People have always liked him; you can see his name posted with *feliciter* (good wishes), unsurprisingly since every penny came out of his pocket. Back when he gave those quinquennial games, Pompeii was still under a senatorial ban imposed in the aftermath of the big and deadly conflict with the people of Nuceria, and only animal fights were being allowed. But Nigidius managed to compensate by staging them with all possible trimmings: his posters advertised awnings, saffron sprinklings, even a set of paintings commissioned for the parapet (Sabbatino-Tumelesi 1980) for which everyone began hailing him as "prince of sponsors" (*princeps munerariorum*, *CIL* 4.7990). Soon afterwards he temporarily stepped back. In the 60s, Pompeii was full of Neronian enthusiasts calling themselves by the silly name Neroppeianses who may not have liked Nigidius very well. Now, for his comeback and special appointment he is staging a full show with gladiators, perhaps the first since the ban. Suedius appreciates that smaller urban centers like this follow the imperial lead; it is well known that Vespasian is building a big new amphitheater in Rome and promising lots of gladiators.

At this point it seems appropriate for Epidius to conduct Suedius to his own house, where he will, during the months to follow, have the opportunity to interact with significant persons as a frequent dinner guest. The location is halfway down one of the two principal streets of business and manufacture running eastward from the south end of the Forum. As we backtrack down the porticus, we see on the right side another reconstruction enterprise in progress; the old tufa colonnade screening the civic buildings is being taken apart for replacement by limestone to match the other sides of the Forum. Was this erasure of past monuments necessary when the money might well have been put to use somewhere else? Perhaps not, Epidius admits, but public money is being laid out in grand fashion on a new thermal establishment two blocks over with all the latest water technologies and a huge palaestra space. Just recently a new shipment of cippolino threshold slabs and column drums has come in.

But since we are going this way, we might as well take a little detour to see something recently repaired, the Temple of Isis. It has an interesting story, take it as you will. Posted above the doorway is the dedicatory inscription declaring that the place has been rebuilt post-earthquake from its foundations by the generosity of one six-year old N. Popidius Celsinus who was rewarded by adlection to the *ordo decurionum* (De Caro 1992). Can we imagine that this kid even knew who Isis was, let alone how much spending money he had? But his father, being a freedman with no possibility of entering the *ordo* himself, cleverly devised this strategy of entry for his son (Richardson 1988). Notably this is the only completed temple restoration in all Pompeii, which is perhaps explained by the popularity of Isis, whose stories of conjugal fidelity make her more sympathetic to human issues than other deities. In addition, as Epidius drily points out, the epigraphic claim

a fundamento restituit (restored from the foundations) is something of an exaggeration (Blanc, Eristov, and Finker 2000). The temple building itself never collapsed, only the porticus, which is what the Ampliati rebuilt, taking the opportunity to put their names in the pavement of a special banquet room that they added at the back. Today worshippers crowd the precinct, and someone says that Isis has been especially popular since Vespasian's ascension, as people know that he had a lot of respect for these Egyptian deities. With good reason: it was in Alexandria that he somehow performed two so-called miracle healings in Serapis' Temple (Tac. *Hist.* 4.81–2). Just look at the new features here in the restored porticus. Paintings on its rear wall aim to give local Isiacists a sense of the Egyptian experience by alternating little images that look like Egyptian shrines with pictures of priests holding sacred objects. Now look up at that acanthus scroll frieze with the little animals playing games in and out of the tendrils. Acanthus scrolls are a popular frieze pattern these days, but only this and one other in a private house have the animals. And a quick look at the back room on which the Ampliatus family put their own special stamp shows two mythological pictures linking Isis with Io.

3 Inside views

Two blocks further on, just below the intersection of the Abbondanza with the street that leads to the Stabian gate, Epidius lives in a venerable family house that until recently belonged to his father M. Epidius Rufus, now deceased. This family is a very old one of Sabellan extraction, although not especially active in politics until this generation. As if to advertise the family pedigree the house itself preserves its look of old times. Located at an important intersection of the Via dell'Abbondanza and the Via di Stabiae, it boasts an impressive vestibule, elevated above the sidewalk on a platform resembling the entrance to the central civic building at the administrative end of the forum behind the tufa colonnade. Immediately inside are more allusions to the public world in the virtual forest of Doric columns comprising the Corinthian atrium. However, there is no peristyle; the rising ground beyond the *tablinum* (records library and reception room) supports only a garden with a summer dining facility at the back. Before the elder Epidius died, father and son had been living side by side in contiguous houses, but young Epidius' recent transfer has left a degree of confusion concerning which name belongs to which house. That the deceased Rufus had lived in this one can be seen by the inscription on the newly constructed *sacellum* (shrine), within the right hand exedra of the atrium, which is inscribed to the "genius of our Rufus" by two freedmen brothers who called themselves Diadumati. This and other rooms are now in the process of redecoration, but already completed paintings on the sides of the *sacellum* show a sacrifice resembling that on the imperial altar of the forum (Franklin 2001).

Having been told that Epidius is serving this year as aedile, Suedius asks about his political ambitions for the future. Has he the decemvirate in view? Of course, Epidius answers, after giving it a couple of years' rest; at the moment his campaign posters are still fresh on peoples' walls. Noticing these, Suedius senses an opportunity and silently ponders the possibility of publicly declaring sponsorship for Epidius' candidacy. Of course the competition for this second office is not especially fierce, as the primary qualification is having held the aedileship at a prior date, so the field is limited and only one

pair of candidates runs. All the better, to be backing a sure winner, because the support of such candidates is a chance to court good publicity by getting one's own name out in front of the populace. If he were to call Epidius a *defensor coloniae* (bulwark of the town) it would make him seem to have been supporting his fellow Pompeians in the property adjudications. And, if he promotes only Epidius as one half of the duumviral pairing, that, in light of his official status, would make him appear to be the official choice of the emperor as well. Although it is too early to promise anything to a fellow he has just met, Suedius also ruminates on how these posters could advertise his own negotiating function along with his imperial mandate. Suppose he called himself *sanctus iudex*, or maybe even *sanctissimus iudex*! Then he might claim to put the whole Pompeian *ordo* behind the candidacy. Of course, all depends how affairs go in the future and how helpful Epidius may be in aiding Suedius with his task of arbitration. But to all appearances, people like him, or liked his father at least.

Viewing Epidius' ancestral house reminds Suedius that an imperial legate must be suitably accommodated. A rental property seems the best short-term solution. Epidius knows of two places publicly advertised. The first is several blocks down the main street so that one passes a number of business establishments on the way: two fulleries that must be rivals with each other, a large bakery, and a *taberna* with a most elegant *lararium* (shrine to a household's guardian spirits) behind its counter. Further down the street we look into an open doorway with a slant view of an atrium and beyond, to see a most amazing image filling half the back wall of the peristyle: a shell-borne Venus floating on the sea's wavy surface and attended by a little cortege of Cupids. Actually it is supposed to simulate a fountain as a part of an array of sculptures. If you went inside, you'd see a skinny, limp-looking image of Mars on a pedestal. The politics of these people, the Satrici Valentes, are a phenomenon because they were once among the strongest of all Neronian partisans in Pompeii. The recently deceased father, Decimus Lucretius Satricus, never even ran for office, basing his civic prestige on his status as a priest in Nero's cult, or *flamen Neronis*. In his own name and that of his son he staged games in the emperor's honor, but now his son has adapted to the times and is running for decurial office (Franklin 2001).

Just beyond we get to the property that Julia Felix wants to rent for a five-year term and read by the door a notice featuring as attractions a *BALNEVM VENERIVM ET NONGENTVM* along with a *taberna*, a pergola and shops (*CIL* 4.1136). Suedius has to inquire of Epidius as to what kind of attraction a *balneum Venerium* might be, but the latter can only reply "we'll have to ask inside." Admitted by the *ianuarius* (doorkeeper) on hand to act as agent, they enter a square atrium, not too elaborately decorated, except for the figured scenes running frieze-like around the upper portions of the wall. Because these scenes are executed in sketchy brush-strokes: it takes a careful look to figure out some of the subjects. But one clear segment gives a clue to the whole theme with its row of equestrian statues on square bases standing before a garland decorated colonnade. These must be the very statues that stood outside the *macellum* (market). Standing before the statues a line of bystanders is reading the information on a long notice board attached to their bases. Now we can see that all the scenes refer to activities of the forum (Parslow 1995). Here are customers at a shoemaker's bench; nearby a school scene with an unfortunate student stretched out for a magisterial flogging. An atrium surrounded by the forum seems good and civic minded, so we push on further into the peristyle. This really

is elegant with new white marble columns topped by exquisitely carved capitals and the *euripus* (water course) that runs the full length must be one of the longest in all Pompeii. Perhaps they keep fish in it. But what about that *balneum*? Does *Venerium* mean that it is a brothel? Quite the opposite our *ianuarius* insists: Nonagentum is very elitist. For all the marble columns and the landscaping, the actual living quarters are pretty cramped. This must really be some kind of setup for a clubhouse or a restaurant. No real place to receive clients and petitioners in here.

But it seems that Gnaeus Alleius himself has a home to rent, the *Insula Arriana Polliana*, available on the Kalends of July (Richardson 1988; Franklin 1997). For an inspection, one arranges with Gnaeus' slave Primus who proudly declares that this generous residence occupies an entire *insula*. With its limestone ashlar doorposts and heavy Corinthian capitals, the entrance has the look of venerable old times. One enters through a longish corridor framed by shops. Primus assures his customer that this is a good busy street extending the *Via di Nola* past the forum baths, and joining at right angles with the street leading directly to the Herculaneum gate. Because it is in the way of much commerce, there should be no trouble finding renters for the shops whose income should help with the expenses of the house. Once inside we find that this is a traditional sort of a house with a symmetrical Tuscan style atrium open to a *tablinum* and a spacious peristyle behind with columns surrounding a central pool. At the back is an ample outdoor dining area, right on the central axis of the space. Given that the summer will be heating up in July, this should be quite welcome. Definitely this *domus* has sufficient dignity for the reception of clients by an official from Rome.

But not a single wall has painting. Naturally, says Primus, Gnaeus Alleius has had everything redone in the years following the last earthquake and wanted to give the tenant opportunity to exercise his own taste. Well something will have to be done about this – and quickly. Although earthquake damage has kept painters well occupied during the past few years, there are quite a lot of them; you just have to get an outfit whose various specialists work well together. In fact you need more than one, for the larger group will prepare the walls, plan the big outlines and the small details (Varone 1995). But then, should you want some showpieces, especially large figure paintings, you have to seek out a *pictor imaginarius* (painter of images), who may be harder to find, because the best ones are much in demand. It is a good strategy to visit recently decorated houses and see whose work you like, and this is not difficult because most owners are quite proud of their decorations and ready to show them off, maybe even tell you more than you want to hear.

Primus suggests starting with a redecorated house next door whose owner is passionate about painting: he has them everywhere and great big ones at that. This owner has only recently moved into town and bought the house; but the doorkeeper, who went with the property, knows Primus well, so in they go, around the black and white mosaic image of a sleeping dog positioned to guard the threshold, as it were, above the legend *Cave canem* (Beware of the Dog). Immediately the atrium shows this new owner's obsession with pictures with one framed on every wall (see Fig. 18.3). References to Troy hold them together, with a romantic subtext. Here is Helen looking coy as she leaves Paris' ship; a tearful Briseis being led from Achilles' tent and, of all surprising choices, Hera seducing Zeus to distract his attention from the Greeks. Compelling presentations, but you can tell that their commissioner is a foreigner who doesn't know local protocols, and probably has no clients making morning calls,



Fig. 18.3 Casa del Poeta Tragico, Pompeii. Reconstruction of the Atrium. Engraving from Gell and Gandy

because a Pompeian would never put up these expensive monumental pictures in his atrium where a crowd of visitors can obscure the view. Such pictures belong in the more intimate interior rooms where personal friends come to dine. Here the doorkeeper who witnessed the whole decorative campaign breaks in to say that this painter is so vain of his talents that he works only in expansive spaces. For the smaller interior spaces, other painters had to be brought in. And he leads the visitors through the shallow *tablinum* into the diminutive garden patch that serves for a peristyle. Here also the owner's penchant for Troy scenes is visible in a Sacrifice of Iphigenia, but with what a difference. Four stiff figures are lined on one ground plane with Odysseus and Diomedes at the center heaving Iphigenia onto the altar like a log of wood. The contrast only sets off the brilliance of the atrium artist whose well-articulated figures possess an air of epic nobility in compositions of palpable perspective depth. In the Briseis and Hera scenes he has disposed a whole cast within the spaces with no appearance of crowding. Perhaps, says the doorkeeper, the large dining area of the Insula Arriana might attract this artist – though these days you won't find him here in Pompeii, but at Herculaneum, where he is employed on a series within the large basilica (Richardson 2000, 172–5).

Before Suedius takes that trip, Epidius advises looking a little further at a house whose lavish decoration might be called a showcase for the whole roster of Pompeian painters (Richardson 1955). Two blocks over on the Via di Mercurio, just below the tower, this *domus* belongs to Nigidius Vaccula. Is Nigidius related to Gnaeus Alleius? That's hard to say, because they move in different circles and neither says a word about kinship, so if true it might be a little awkward for either party to advertise. Nigidius Vaccula has emigrated from Capua where he was involved in that city's flourishing bronze industry, and has brought his proprietorship here with good profit

(Franklin 2001). He is so little embarrassed by being in trade that he gave some bronze benches to the forum baths. The benches have cow leg supports – a playful way to show himself off as the donor (*vaccula* means “little cow”). Being a businessman, rather than a magistrate, he will most likely be found settled at home and ready to display his decorative investment.

Outside, the house itself is nothing to look at. In fact this whole row of house facades, which, as Epidius tells, are covering some of the most brilliant interiors in the city are as plain as – actually plainer than – a city wall. But right inside the doorway is the first sample of the decorative work: statue-like images of the two Dioscuri brothers with their horses. Have a look at the painter’s style. He makes really staring eyes, but does drapery very well in lots of supple folds. Immediately inside, another of these Corinthian atria dominates the space. While Epidius congratulates Nigidius on owning the only other such atrium in all Pompeii, he adds sotto voce to Suedius that, unlike the venerable solid stone columns at his place, these are made from the kind of masonry mix under stucco that is common these days. Even so, and if Nigidius is no pedigreed aristocrat, he decorates in a manner more in keeping with Pompeian custom; no oversized pictures, but a tasteful set of little divinities on the walls to be seen through the interstices of the columns as you move about the space. Unmistakably the work of the same painter who did the Dioscuri, they imitate small statues poised on consoles, but no carved images could be clothed in such exquisitely textured fabrics. Draped in a rich purple lap mantle a bushy-haired Zeus looks benevolently from his throne with a victory standing behind him. An elegant Ceres, standing with her torch and fruit-basket, wears a floating over-garment of fine blue silk while a white-robed Saturn with a sickle looks suspiciously sideways towards the younger Olympians. As we walk around admiring them all, we come to the lofty *tablinum* that the columns of the *impluvium* (indoor water basin) have partially screened. Its high walls frame very large paintings within intricately detailed housings. And it looks as if Nigidius may be no less literate than our Greco-chauvinist next door because his paintings also have an Homeric/Trojan theme: they focus on Achilles, showing on the one hand his penchant for the girls and on the other how hot-headed and uncontrolled he can be when he confronts Agamemnon about appropriating Briseis. It’s just what Horace says about writing Achilles; you have to make him wrathful and impulsive. Impulsive also when the Greeks were gathering their forces, and, though disguised, he gave himself away by seizing weapons from Odysseus, falling for that wily recruiter’s trick.

Surprisingly Nigidius knows even more about the background of this painting: he explains that it is derived from a fourth-century Greek original by the artist Athenion of Maroneia, which was a six-figure composition. Suedius actually remembers this from a book of the *Natural History* that Vespasian’s friend Pliny the Elder is writing. Nonetheless, Nigidius continues, this picture is no simple copy: the painter has a style of his own. See how silly he has made Achilles look in his girl’s clothes (see Fig. 18.4). Yes, Epidius agrees, the fellow does seem to enjoy the absurdity of situations in which great masculine heroes are caught cross-dressing. You should see the Hercules and Omphale that he has done in the big dining room of the house that belongs to Marcus Lucretius. Embarrassed faces are his particular skill. Definitely this is another of the prized painters, but he might be hard to engage, because he is



Fig. 18.4 Casa dei Dioscuri, Pompeii. Painting from the Tablinum: Achilles Discovered by Odysseus on Skyros. National Archaeological Museum of Naples. Photograph by author

based in Naples and seldom comes down this way. He is said to have painted only four other pictures in Pompeii, and a couple in Stabiae, all of them monumental mythological scenes – which are what everyone who can pay for them wants these days (Richardson 1955).

This house is really worth seeing. At the back, the *tablinum* opens into a shallow elongated garden area, its walls covered by simulated garden paintings, which one knows as a long-standing favorite of the Campanians who never want to be without their greenery and flowers. For a long view of the enclosure, the right vantage point seems to be a window in the far end wall, and to take this in, it is necessary to cross from the atrium, through an alcove bay into the large colonnaded peristyle, the obvious showplace for painting. The position of this space at the side, rather than the rear, of the atrium, indicates that the current plan represents an amalgamation of two houses, but this is not unusual within this block of the Via di Mercurio where a great deal of reconfiguration

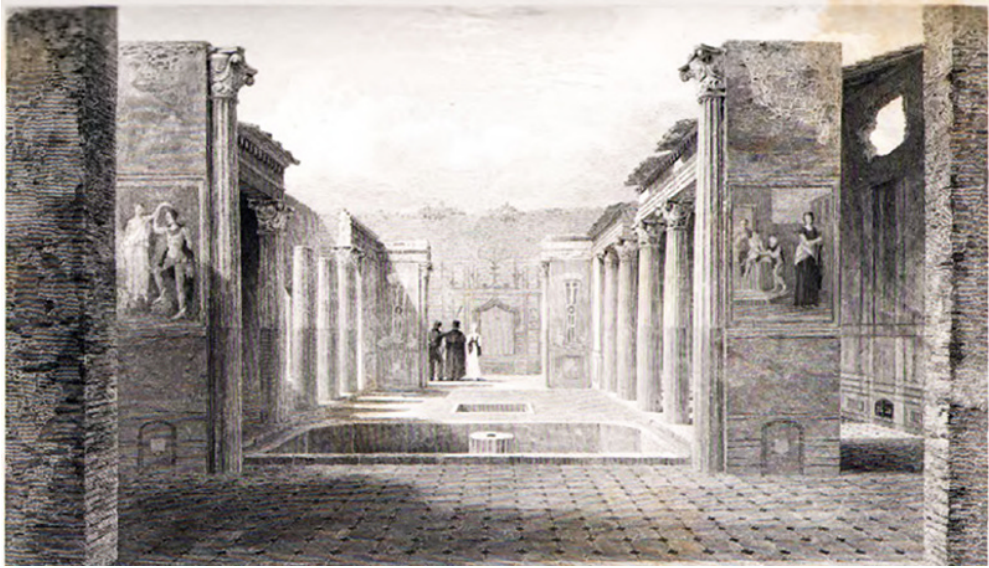


Fig. 18.5 Casa dei Dioscuri, Pompeii. View from the Peristyle Oecus. Engraving from Gell and Gandy

has altered the original boundaries of party walls. Some houses have gained space and others have lost. This opulent enclosure features water in abundance, with a bubbling fountain at the center and a transverse pool at the end. Walking along this portico noticing the decoration, one sees further examples of our divinity painter's mastery of subtle fabrics, here in the diaphanous blue cloak that swirls behind a Bacchus floating in space. At the far eastern end is a luxury installation that just a few years ago would have been wholly unknown in any Pompeian residence; a capacious squared chamber veneered in colored marbles. Its side window gives an advantageous view of the long painted garden area, but the broad doorway looks out into the peristyle as a series of concentric frames (see Fig. 18.5).

On matching piers at the far end beyond the pool are a pair of singular images; one has to approach closely to see that they are representations of large tripods encircled by figures that show Apollo and Diana shooting down the children of Niobe, girls on one side and boys on the other. This special creation is like nothing in any other Pompeian house; Nigidius has commissioned it as his own personal *jeu d'esprit* because, of course, the bronze that these pseudo-sculptures imitate is the specialty of his industry. But one has to wonder whether he or his workmen could really make anything so intricate in real bronze.

But the panel paintings are what one is supposed to look at: Medea holding the sword as she contemplates her children and Perseus unbinding Andromeda from the rock. Why these two subjects were paired stretches ingenuity. As to the painter, his sense of body proportions is a little idiosyncratic. He makes small heads, knobby knees and full muscles, even on the women, while Perseus' upper torso looks too long for his legs. Anatomy notwithstanding, this painter is one of the most active of the restoration artists with work all over the city (Richardson 1955).

Perhaps his skills will look better in still another house, overall the most richly painted in all Pompeii. It belongs to two Vettii kinsmen, and the minute we enter the atrium we cannot help but notice the exquisite detailing of the simulated candelabra framed in niches. This room opens directly into the peristyle without a *tablinum*. To see our Perseus Painter's work we turn left to a room with a predominant gold background. Two of the subjects are a bit grim, but the combination makes sense here because they are connected with the dramas of Thebes. On the back wall is Pentheus on Cithaeron at the fatal moment when his rabid mother and aunt have raised their spears to strike. To the right, Zethus and Amphion are binding Dirce to the bull. But this upbeat story is the very opposite of Pentheus' fate, because Antiope's two sons have rescued their mother from this same cruel death with which Dirce was threatening her. Paintings based on this myth are perennially popular in Pompeii probably because Pacuvius' *Antiope* has always been a big hit in the theater. Although one can see the likeness between Zethus' knees, his profile and elongated torso and those of Perseus, now the painter is creating tense drama in his scenes. Look here on the left where infant Hercules is squeezing two serpents in his fists like toys while his mother and nursemaid throw up their arms in horror and Amphitryon sits pensively wondering how you deal with the suspicion that some god has had his way with your wife. But this curly-haired, precocious toddler resembles a younger Titus, don't you think?

This house exemplifies the style of the times: the big-eye-catching panels are impressively framed with elaborate columns and prospects beyond into indefinable space; at the same time the details are precise. Walking down the peristyle we come to a room whose even more complex architecture frames panels in deep rich red. Here is a space that was generous enough for the expansive imagination of our Troy painter. Look at those statuette figures: a handsome bronzed Mercury with the figure of a Greek athlete has bound Ixion to a wheel, but Daedalus exhibiting the wooden heifer to Pasiphae is also a finely proportioned figure of a man. Although attired in the carpenter's brown *exomis* (Greek tunic), he is almost too god-like for a craftsman (see Fig. 18.6). Pasiphae is perverse not to choose him over the bull. Another thing to notice here is the simulated marble patterns in the dado, which show us how popular colored marbles are becoming in Rome, though they are hard to get here. The best solution is to buy what comes from the scrap heap: Vespasian gets a multicolored flooring for his *Templum Pacis* and all the leftovers go on the market at a good price. This is indeed the same painter that we saw back in that overdressed atrium. The only other place where you see anything like this is in the Basilica at Herculaneum. So this is the painter to hire, but good luck in getting him.

But maybe one should see a team of these painters still operating. There's a house just down the Via dell' Abbondanza that shows how well the teams work together with their *pictor imaginarius* (Varone 1995). No one's living there at the moment so the workmen won't mind if we just walk in. Although the central panel is still merely sketched in outline, the fine framing details appear finished and reveal the hands of the Vettii team even to another little praedella scene of Cupids driving antelope chariots.

One more thing, says Epidius, that you really must have a look at for your planning. Let's just go and have a drink near the amphitheater. They walk through a series of rooms to an covered outdoor triclinium, whose fixed stone couches, frescoed all over with garden greenery, make a little illusionistic grove. Their open side faces towards a pair of free standing mosaic fountains, colorful motifs against white background tesserae



Fig. 18.6 Casa dei Vettii, Pompeii. Red Oecus. “Daedalus exhibiting the wooden heifer to Pasiphae.” Photograph © Scala/Art Resource, New York, ART106897

that blindingly reflect early afternoon sun. Actually they aren’t meant for midday viewing; the background is white because diners usually come here in late afternoon when the glass reflects lamplight. A workshop that specializes in these fountains has recently installed about six of them in various houses (Leach 2010). No two are alike, but something watery usually figures among the motifs such as ducks here swimming in the water basin along with preposterously multicolored fish that are actually larger than the ducks. Another one has a scallop shell Venus in its lunette, but Epidius fancies one that has a head of the River Sarno at its water spout. Always placed out of doors, but not in so large a space, these fountains brilliantly dress up a shallow peristyle enclosure when they are backed up against painted garden ambiances. All the same, one would probably be lost in the big peristyle of the *Insula Arriana*.

So Suedius goes off to get in touch with the painters as Epidius heads to the aediles’ office in the forum, hoping that nothing they have been visiting turns out to be on pre-empted public property.

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FURTHER READING

Robert Harris' bestseller *Pompeii: A Novel* (2003) is a riveting fictional recreation of the last weeks of the city that includes an element of mystery plot and invests many characters whose existence and residences are documented with invented personalities. De Carolis and Patricelli (2003) provides an explanation of the eruption that is informed by the most up-to-date research in volcanology. Parslow (1995) builds a history of discovery and excavation around the biography of Karl Weber, the Swiss engineer who was the first truly professional 18th-century supervisor of excavations.

Richardson (1988) tracks the development of Pompeii from the second century BCE through detailed examination of its architecture. Zanker (1998) offers a sound introduction to the ancient city with some inclination toward the empire and a tendency to dwell on luxuries. Leach (2011) places the variations of Pompeian wall decoration within their larger historical context with attention to the cultural meanings of compositions.

CHAPTER 19

The Aesthetics of the Everyday in Flavian Art and Literature

Sarah H. Blake

1 Flavian art and periodization

The monumental public works of the Flavian period are neither few nor unimportant: the Colosseum and the Palace of Domitian on the Palatine are arguably the most impressive buildings of ancient Rome, while the sculpture work of the Cancelleria reliefs and the Arch of Titus prompted art historian Donald Strong to assert that “The skill of the [Flavian period] craftsman was never surpassed” (Strong 1976, 128; Henderson 2003). Discussions of the “Flavian” aesthetic or style, therefore, tend to begin with these famous works of art and architecture associated with the Flavian imperial house. As the period itself is defined by the imperial *gens*, it is natural that an investigation into the particularly Flavian qualities of art or expression should also begin with the imperial house. Moreover, the biographies of the Flavians provide a tempting narrative arc within which to interpret this wealth of material: Vespasian, following the successful model of Augustus, increases popularity and the perception of stability by reacting against the excessive luxury of Nero through, for example, the symbolic reappropriation of the grounds of the *Domus Aurea* and the replacement of Nero’s head on the Colossus; Vespasian’s piety and respect for the people of Rome is manifest in his restoration of the Capitol, the initiation of work on the Flavian Amphitheater and the construction of the stunning Temple of Peace, which is the culmination of Pliny the Elder’s list of the most beautiful buildings ever seen (*NH* 36.102); the hope of a stable regime and future dynasty based on this good beginning is shaken by the early death of Titus, and shattered by Domitian’s descent into excess and the megalomania that spawns a profusion of statues, trophies and arches celebrating his victories throughout the city;¹ Domitian’s persona is manifest in his most impressive and imposing building, his home on the Palatine, which – like a combination of the *Domus Aurea* and the Colosseum – serves both as a luxuriously appointed private residence and an awe-inspiring backdrop for lavish imperial spectacle. Developments in Flavian imperial aesthetics can thus be connected quite closely to the personalities of the emperors.

Beyond the sphere of official monuments and gossip about the imperial rulers, however, isolating an aesthetic within this 30-year period proves a difficult prospect. Despite the dramatic political events of the period, there are negligible technological or ideological changes at the macro level such as might incite major aesthetic shifts. Simultaneously, we lack much of the intangible and ephemeral evidence that might help to reconstruct fashions or styles on the micro level. Nevertheless, there survives a surprising amount of literary and material evidence for the period in question that can aid in reconstructing some aspects of a Flavian aesthetic or aesthetics.

Tacitus tells us that Vespasian was known for his old-fashioned ways and restrained simplicity of manner (*sed praecipuus adstricti moris auctor Vespasianus fuit, antiquo ipse cultu victuque*, *Ann.* 3.55), and that this austere manner was reflected in the changing senatorial order; as men from Italy infiltrated the senate, they brought with them certain habits of frugality (*domesticam parsimoniam*). Tacitus speculates on the motivations for this change in fashion: either it was due to a desire to follow and to emulate the emperor or, possibly, the natural laws of fashion dictated cyclical changes in manner:

obsequium inde in principem et aemulandi amor validior quam poena ex legibus et metus. nisi forte rebus cunctis inest quidam velut orbis, ut quem ad modum temporum vices ita morum vertantur.

Tac. *Ann.* 3.55

From then on, respect for the emperor, and a love of emulation were stronger motivations than fear or legal penalties. Unless it is just that in all things there is a cycling, and as the times change, so there is a changing of customs too.

Tacitus' musings here offer two models for manners in Flavian Rome: one, a mode determined by the emperor's personal tastes, and two, a mode that emerges organically, driven perhaps by demographic changes (e.g., influx of new social groups) or by dissatisfaction with the status quo for moral reasons. Tacitus thus illustrates the traditional Roman interconnection between style and *mores*: morality and aesthetics are, at the least, in conversation with each other and, at the most, one and the same. In this instance, luxury is rejected and old-fashioned Roman austerity is adopted as a style to convey a message about character and political intentions. Sufficient material evidence to confirm Tacitus' diagnosis of the new Vespasianic austerity is lacking,² but the model he offers for locating the source of cultural preferences opens the door for finding aesthetic values outside of the official imperial house-generated ones. Tacitus' confusion suggests that these models are not mutually exclusive but may rather operate in concert with each other.

2 Aesthetics and the Flavian viewer

Built from the Greek verb *aisthanesthai*, to perceive, the term aesthetic is polyvalent. Primarily, the adjective aesthetic indicates perceived beauty in visual arts. In its traditional philosophical meaning, the study of aesthetics concerns the nature of beauty, and the relationship of beauty to pleasure, truth, knowledge, and humanity. Once contextualized in social and historical terms, however, and used as an abstracted noun, "an aesthetic" comes to signify a code of viewing or perception founded in a system of values immanent in specific modes of

representation. Irrespective of the particular character of the aesthetic (for example, modernist, futurist, abstractionist, neoclassical, hipster), an aesthetic can generally be said to have a positive connotation: the aesthetic is the visible manifestation of something that is beautiful, valuable, or truthful. So, although once applied strictly to the visual arts, aesthetic can now be comfortably used to describe a variety of cultural activities, from a code of viewing to a code of living, such as, for example, wabi sabi, the Japanese Buddhist-derived aesthetic of transience, or the Slow Food movement, which reacts against McMeals by embracing the sensuous pleasures of preparing and consuming food at a leisurely and more “natural” pace.

Flavian poetry often provides a lens through which to view Flavian art and architecture, and can therefore assist in reconstructing the values immanent to Flavian aesthetics. Martial’s *Liber Spectaculorum*, for example, celebrates the inauguration of the Flavian Amphitheater, a building that outstrips all the other architectural wonders of the world (*Spect.* 1), frees the people from the hated halls of Nero that used to dominate the city (*Spect.* 2), and ultimately recreates the world at Rome by bringing peoples from every corner of the globe to join in unified praise of the emperor at the spectacle (*Spect.* 3; Coleman 2006, 2–53; Naas 2002, 449–55). Vespasian’s rejection of Neronian luxury is thus framed between two poems celebrating the new Flavian building as the magnetic center of the empire. Meanwhile, Statius’ description of the equestrian statue of Domitian in *Silvae* 1.1 also emphasizes the immense size of the monument: he fears the ground will not hold up under the weight of the statue, as it is so overloaded with the *genius* of the emperor (1.1.56–8). Size, grandeur, and global mastery, therefore, are the principal aesthetic values of these imperial works (Newmyer 1984). This is most explicit, perhaps, in Statius’ description of the dining hall of the *Domus Flavia*, which dramatizes the viewer’s encounter with a monumental, imperial space:

Tectum augustum, ingens, non centum insigne columnis,
sed quantae superos caelumque Atlante remisso
sustentare queant. stupet hoc vicina Tonantis
regia, teque pari laetantur sede locatum
numina (nec magnum properes escendere caelum)
tanta patet moles effusaeque impetus aulae
liberior, campi multumque amplexus operi
aetheros, et tantum domino minor; ille penates
implet et ingenti genio iuvat. aemulus illic
mons Libys Iliacusque nitet, multa Syene
et Chios et glaucae certantia Doridi saxa
Lunaque portandis tantum suffecta columnis.
longa supra species: fessis vix culmina prenda
visibus auratique putes laquearia caeli.

Stat. *Silv.* 4.2.18–31

A magnificent edifice, immense, decorated not just with a hundred columns, but with as many as could hold up heaven, if Atlas relaxed. The palace of the Thunderer next door gapes, and the gods rejoice to see you settled in equal splendor – but don’t rush up to great heaven yourself! The heights are so spacious, the wings of the hall spread so wide, more open than a sprawling plain, encompassing the heavens, yet much less than its master. He fills the house, and imbues it with his mighty spirit. Here the Libyan mountain competes, the Ilian stone gleams, the Syene and Chios and stones rivaling the grey sea, and Luna too,

brought in to support the columns. The view is far above; you can scarcely take in the heights with tired eyes – you would think it the gilded panels of the heavens.

The remarkable size and heavenly scope of the room enable a comparison between Domitian and his neighbor Jupiter. Statius highlights the immense spaces traveled by the eye to take in the heights of the room and the innumerable columns, imported from all corners of the empire. So large is the space that the viewer's eye is exhausted and overwhelmed. This hyperbolic reaction to seeing the dining hall conveys the magnitude of Domitian's power, his position at the center of all things geographic and cosmic. The amazed and reverent poet illustrates the appropriate response to the dazzling display.

Most dining rooms in the Flavian period, however, had none of the cosmic grandeur and visually exhausting architecture of Domitian's palace. This chapter aims to identify, describe and contextualize an aesthetic founded in values different from this aestheticization of imperial power. This countervailing aesthetic can be loosely grouped around the concept of "the everyday." What specifically constitutes the "everyday" is unique to each culture, but in general, the everyday centers around the habitual movements and actions that make up the day's routine activities. Everyday-ness is the opposite of cosmic, grand, and immense; it is repetitive, functional activity on a small, human scale, and is frequently defined by humility or low cost. Spatially, everyday life is centered in the home, in the kitchen, at the table; it involves the daily preparation and consumption of food, the dressing and care of the body; activities performed with those objects that Kubler (1962) called "prime objects," the elementary tools of everyday existence: pot, spoon, cloth. Naturally, this aesthetic centers on consumption, as food is elevated to art. Once the everyday becomes aestheticized, that is, becomes the object of contemplation, abstracted from its context or made beautiful and special, it is no longer actually ordinary but rather comes to stand in for the idea of the ordinary.

As with the poetry that celebrates the monumental Flavian works, the art and literature that center on the aesthetic pleasures of ordinary things can also be connected to specifically Vespasianic values: utility and practicality, peacefulness and stability, and traditional Italian morality over exoticism and luxury. The aestheticization of everyday life celebrates the prosperity and abundance that arrives along with the Flavian peace. In its dimensions as an aesthetic, however, this taste for artistic representations of the ordinary ironically allows for the display of immense luxury and personal power.

3 The everyday in Romano-Campanian wall paintings

The mural painting recovered from Campanian towns reveals a large number of images that pertain directly to the preparation and consumption of food (Croisille 1965; De Caro 2001). In terms of genre, these images are forerunners of still life painting, in that they exclude the human figure and concentrate instead on a limited set of objects: fruits and vegetables, birds and fish, bread, tableware and other everyday objects such as writing materials. Vitruvius describes images like this in his description of the Greek house:

Nam cum fuerunt Graeci delicatiores et fortuna opulentiores, hospitibus advenientibus instruebant triclinia, cubicula, cum penu cellas, primoque die ad cenam invitabant, postero mittebant pullos, ova, holera, poma reliquasque res agrestes. Ideo pictores ea, quae mittebantur

hospitibus, picturis imitantes xenia appellaverunt. Ita patres familiarum in hospitio non videbantur esse peregre, habentes secretam in his hospitalibus libertatem.

Vitr. 6.7.4

For when the Greeks were more elegant and richer, they prepared dining rooms and bedrooms with well-stocked pantries for their arriving guests. On the first day they were invited to a formal dinner, and on the next day, they sent chicken, eggs, vegetables, fruits and other rustic produce. And so the painters imitating the kinds of things that were sent to the guests in their pictures called them *xenia*. Thus heads of households, despite being guests, did not seem to be away from home, for they had in these guest quarters privacy and autonomy.

Xenia, therefore, are paintings of rustic produce: fowl, eggs, vegetables, and fruits, meant to imitate the feeling of hospitality and abundance that the elegant host might strive for.

Images like the kind that Vitruvius describes are present in Campanian wall painting from an early stage, frequently rendered as *pinakes* or tablets, often with folding shutters and arranged for display, as if in a gallery (a particularly fine example is the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii, on which see Ling 1991; van Buren 1938, 70–81). Elements of *xenia* also appear outside of framed panels. The Villa at Oplontis features large glass bowls of fruit perched up high as if set upon the architrave or as freestanding elements, for example, the bird and baskets arranged at the bottom of the panels (Bergmann 2002). Nearly identical glass bowls of fruit are found in similar positions on the cubiculum walls of the villa at Boscoreale. *Xenia* are also to be found in Third Style decorative schemes, sometimes as miniaturized, freestanding objects or composed within a frame, as for example, a small panel depicting fish either spilling out of an overturned basket, or hanging on the wall, as if from a nail. It is during the so-called Fourth Style, however, dated to the second half of the first century CE that *xenia* proliferate and are found in various positions in wall decoration. *Xenia*, or still life paintings, are very much in fashion at the time of the eruption of Vesuvius (De Caro 2001, 30; Croisille 1965, 9–11; Ling 1999, 154–6).

Perhaps the most glorious examples of *xenia* in the Fourth Style come from the so-called House of Julia Felix in Pompeii, now in the National Archeological Museum at Naples. *Xenia* stretch along the upper register of the north and south wall of the *tablinum*: on the north wall is included a translucent glass bowl, brimming with apples, pears and grapes (see Fig. 19.1). Two other vessels, along with individual fruits, a split-open pomegranate, an apple and a loaf of bread, are carefully arranged along two blocks at different heights. Along the south wall, a series of four panels is preserved: (a) assorted breads and cakes arranged on two blocks; (b) live fish, eels, and shellfish in a tank; (c) an assemblage of food – perhaps a full meal? – including a metal vessel with long-handled spoon, silver plate with ten eggs, a glass pitcher, four small dead birds and a fringed white cloth hanging as if pegged to the wall behind, and finally, a smaller vessel leaning at an angle against the plinth upon which the other things are laid out (see Fig. 19.2); and (d), a frame split into two horizontal bands, designed to resemble shelves, across the upper of which are seen two piles of coins separated by a sealed bag of coins. On the lower



Fig. 19.1 Fruits in a glass bowl, with other vessels. From the House of Julia Felix, Pompeii (II.4.3). *Tablinum*, north wall. Naples Museum 8611 B. Croisille 1965: no. 11. Photograph by author



Fig. 19.2 Eggs, birds, and vessels. House of Julia Felix, Pompeii (II. 4.3). *Tablinum*, south wall. Naples Museum 8598 C. Croisille 1965: no. 8. Photograph by author

shelf is a collection of writing materials: an inkpot with stylus, a small scroll, a tablet with five leaves, and another type of tablet painted as if hanging from a nail in the back wall.

The *xenia* of the House of Julia Felix are luxurious and well-executed versions of what appears much more simply in other contexts – for example, a spare depiction of two figs on a ledge, and a round loaf of bread below (see Fig. 19.3). This austere



Fig. 19.3 Figs with bread. Naples Museum 8625; Croisille 1965, no. 24. Photograph by author

painting of unknown provenance within Herculaneum depicts very plain food and yet serves to emphasize the pleasant curves of the two large figs, and the inviting golden brown shade of the bread divided into seven pieces. As with Figs. 19.1 and 19.2, attention is paid to contrast in shapes and colors, as well as to the careful composition of the objects on blocks or levels, or as if hanging from the wall. The close focus on the subjects, solemnly arranged against a neutral, empty background is designed to hold the viewer's attention on the things themselves, things which range in value from low (an egg, a fig) to quite high (metal vessels, glassware, and blatantly, piles of coins).

On the one hand, the *xenia* depict the abundance of food available to the villa owner and guests: breads, fish, fowl, game, fruit, and eggs. These are the simple country things (*res agrestes*) given as a gesture of elegance from host to guest, as Vitruvius describes above. The images thus capture a certain tension between luxury and the idyllic simplicity traditionally associated with pastoral life. The *xenia* of the House of Julia Felix, in particular, are skillfully executed; the skin of the fruits seems to glow from within the transparent glass, and the colors, textures and shapes are harmoniously arranged. These images convey a sense of luxury not simply by depicting costly or exotic things, but rather by carefully and beautifully rendering everyday objects. It should be noted, however, that these images are quite large; each of these panels is approximately a meter wide and 0.75 m tall. Thus the images have an overblown, fantastical aspect, looming up much larger than the actual objects they imitate, as if under a microscope.

Sterling, who has argued for continuity in the genre of still life from antiquity to the present day, describes the content of the genre:

The centuries-old monotony of still life themes ... in which the paintable things have remained the same: flowers, fruit, and other items of food, the receptacles containing them, and a few objects which intimately follow us through life – a book, a pipe. These are the commonplace things, within hand's reach. They have been, as it were, domesticated by men since time immemorial.

Sterling 1959, 158

Paradoxically, the objects which are so intimately human are depicted without human figures. In fact, the genre is defined by this exclusion (Ebert-Schifferer 1999). Ancient and modern still life works by taking ordinary, overlooked objects out of human hands and turning them into art objects: the ephemeral becomes permanent and the functional aestheticized. There are no human figures, no reference to the mundane context in which these objects would ordinarily be embedded.

Still life painting thus invites the viewer to imagine what is so deliberately excluded from the picture: the people. In his text *Imagines*, Philostratus the Elder, the third-century CE rhetorician, gives an insight into the way these images might have been viewed when he recreates a visit to an art gallery in Naples where, as the learned scholar, he gives a short lesson on each painting. There are two images within this collection entitled *Xenia*; each of these describes a painting that depicts objects comparable to the painted *xenia* so popular throughout the homes of the Campanian towns. In *Xenia* 2.3–4, we read:

If you care for raised bread or “eight-piece loaves” they are here nearby in the deep basket. And if you want any relish, you have the loaves themselves – for they have been seasoned with fennel and parsley and also with poppy-seed, the spice that brings sleep – but if you desire a second course, put that off till you have cooks, and partake of the food that needs no fire. Why, then, do you not take the ripe fruit, of which there is a pile here in the other basket? Do you not know that in a little while you will no longer find it so fresh, but already the dew will be gone from it? And so do not overlook the dessert, if you care at all for the medlar fruit and Zeus’ acorns, which the smoothest of trees bears in a prickly husk that is horrid to peel off. Away with even the honey since we have here this *palathè*, or whatever you like to call it, so sweet and dainty it is! And it is wrapped in its own leaves, which lend beauty to the *palathè*. I think the painting offers these *xenia* to the master of the farm, and he is taking a bath, having perhaps the look in his eyes of Pramnian or Thasian wines, although he might, if he would, drink the sweet new wines at the table here, and then on his return to the city might smell of pressed grapes and of leisure and might belch in the faces of the city-dwellers.

tr. Mozley

The image of loaves of bread and cakes, dewy and ripe piles of fruits, and honeyed cakes calls Philostratus to imagine what is missing from the picture: the self-satisfied master who should be enjoying all of these rustic delights. Philostratus’ imagined master is, as Bryson (1990) points out, a city-dweller with a country house, yet one who would choose to drink imported wine over the wine produced on his own estate. The images of abundant, naturally ready food send a social message about possession, luxury, and choice in personal consumption. Philostratus’ vision illustrates that the *xenia* images refer ultimately to the

master of the house rather than to those who would actually be in direct contact with the objects: the farm and kitchen workers who produce and prepare the food.

4 Flavian texts about everyday things

Martial's two early collections, the *Xenia* (84 CE) and *Apophoreta* (85 CE), which have been transmitted as Books 13 and 14 of his *Epigrams*, provide another way to interpret the ancient still life so prevalent in Campanian wall decoration. These two books are collections of couplets each headed by a title (*lemma*) and each describing a single object: food and drink in the *Xenia* (124 couplets) and durable goods in the *Apophoreta* (220 couplets). The collections include a wide array of items, ranging in value from cheap to expensive, including some exotic imports as well as the staples of the Roman pantry and the "life of the table" (Bryson 1990, 14).

The title of the collection, *Xenia*, alludes to gift-exchange between guest and host and also to the abstracted representations of the objects of those exchanges as described by Vitruvius:

Omnis in hoc gracili xeniorum turba libello
constabit nummis quattuor empta tibi.
quattuor est nimium? poterit constare duobus,
et faciet lucrum bybliopola Tryphon.
haec licet hospitibus pro munere disticha mittas,
si tibi tam rarus quam mihi nummus erit.
addita per titulos sua nomina rebus habebis:
praetereas, si quid non facit ad stomachum.

Mart. *Ep.* 13.3

The whole crowd of *xenia* in this slender little book will cost you four coins to buy. Four is too many? It could cost two and bookseller Trypho still make a profit. You can send these couplets to your guests instead of gifts, if money is as scarce with you as it is with me. You will see each thing's name added as a title: pass on by, if something is not to taste.

The poems of the *Apophoreta* are also connected to hospitality: the Greek term refers to things given by hosts to their guests as take-away gifts.³ Every poem in these collections has a *titulus* (title) as if they were images or objects on display in a gallery such as the one Philostratus describes. The reader is invited to move through the collection as he or she likes and to consider the items on offer.⁴ The occasion of the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* is the Saturnalia, a traditional time for men to exchange gifts (for example, Cat. 35, Stat. *Silv.* 4.9). Objects exchanged were often of very low value, a conceit Martial uses to excuse the trifling nature of his epigrams and to reject serious epic poetry (14.1.7–9). The objects described in the collections include all of the food, animals, tableware and other inanimate objects seen in the painted *xenia*. The *Apophoreta*, for example, opens with a series of poems on writing materials, game pieces and coin boxes (14.3–20), the precise combination of objects depicted in the panel from the House of Julia Felix.

Martial's *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* share the Campanian *xenia*'s aesthetic interest in consumption. The reader is invited to browse through a collection of everyday objects available for his or her consumption. Consider the opening series of poems consisting of grains and legumes:

13.4 *Tus*

Serus ut aetheriae Germanicus imperet aulae
utque diu terris, da pia tura Iovi.

Incense: So that Germanicus rules in the heavenly palace late, and on earth for a long time, give pious incense to Jove.

13.5 *Piper*

Cerea quae patulo lucet ficedula lumbo
cum tibi sorte datur, si sapis, adde piper.

Pepper: When a waxy beccafico, shining with ample loins, is given to you by lot, if you're smart, add pepper.

13.6 *Alica*

Nos alicam, poterit mulsum tibi mittere dives.
si tibi noluerit mittere dives, emes.

Wheat gruel: I can send you wheat gruel; a rich man will be able to send you mead. If the rich man won't, then buy!

13.7 *Faba*

Si spumet rubra conchis tibi pallida testa
lautorum cenis saepe negare potes.

Beans: If pale beans foam in your earthen pot, you can often say no to dinners with the jet set.

13.8 *Far*

Imbue plebeias Clusinis pultibus ollas,
ut satur in vacuis dulcia musta bibas.

Groats: Steep your common jars with porridge from Clusium so that, when you're full, you can drink sweet new wine from the empties.

13.9 *Lens*

accipe Niliacem, Pelusia munera, lentem:
vilior est alica, carior illa faba.

Lentils: Receive lentils from the Nile, a Pelusian gift that's cheaper than gruel, but more expensive than beans.

13.10 *Simila*

Nec dotes simulae possis numerare nec usus,
pistori totiens cum sit et apta coco.

Flour: You couldn't count the properties or uses of flour, since it is useful so often for the baker and the cook.

In this brief series alone, one can see the variation that Martial displays in his depiction of everyday objects. Indeed, the poet resembles the *pistor* (baker) and *cocus* (cook) of 13.10 who can make innumerable confections from the plain, ordinary material of flour (Johnson 2005). The opening poem makes an offering to Domitian, comparing him to Jupiter: aromatic incense is burned and travels up to the heavenly palace Domitian will eventually rule. By contrast, the first series of objects described are the heavy and inexpensive grains that make up the basic carbohydrates of the Roman diet. Although he appears again in the final poem, Domitian is absent from the bulk of the collection: the center of the action is the marketplace, the kitchen, and the table.⁵

A large number of the poems in the collection are, like 13.5 and 13.8, concerned with the best way to consume something: either by improving the taste or sensory experience, or the impact on the digestion (13.13, 13.14). A second overriding concern of the collections is the value of the objects: the *Apophoreta* is organized to alternate an expensive with an inexpensive object (14.1.5–6). *Xenia* 13.7 combines these themes; a simple dinner of pale beans enables one either to reject an overly luxurious dinner or to be free from wrangling after such an invitation. In either case, the humble bean provides self-sufficiency and, possibly, some sensuous pleasure in and of itself: the pale beans contrasting with the red vessel and the lively verb *spumere* (to foam) provide a vivid image.

In the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, Martial is working in a certain mode that resonates with the Campanian *xenia*; the epigrams present stripped down, anonymous and lowly objects located at no particular place or time. The poems center on the objects named in the



Fig. 19.4 Branch of peaches. House of the Deer, Herculaneum (IV.21). Cryptoporticus, east wall. Naples Museum 8645 C. Crosille 1965: no. 44. Photograph by author

title, while humans are off-stage, or referred to as the general and anonymous “you” and “me.” These objects are ordinarily overlooked, but here they become the central focus of the reader’s attention, often describing themselves in the first person. Compare poem 13.46, *Persica praecocia* (Early peaches) with the painting of a cluster of peaches on the branch from the House of the Deer in Herculaneum (see Fig. 19.4):

13.46 *Persica praecocia*

Vilia maternis fueramus Persica ramis:
Nunc in adoptivis Persica cara sumus.

Early peaches: We were peaches of low value on our native branches. Now, on adopted ones, we are expensive.

Both poem and painting focus closely on the peaches, to the exclusion of any specific human context. In the poem, the peaches boast about going from ordinary (*vilia*) in their natural state to becoming something special (*cara*) as they are grafted onto an apricot branch, a process intended clearly to increase the pleasures of consumption. Likewise, the peaches in the painted *xenia* also take on an unnaturally special character; the curved shapes of the fruits and the vertical sweep of the branch stand out in contrast to the horizontal ledges, as the peaches spill forward toward the viewer. One peach to the right has proved too tempting and appears to have a bite out of it, revealing white flesh within. These peaches are now valuable and aesthetic objects enticing consumption, yet both painting and poem refer to the natural, ordinary context from which the fruits were abstracted.

5 An abundance of everyday things: Pliny’s *Natural History*

The objects of the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* are offered up to anonymous readers for their delectation, creating a sense of abundance and choice; perhaps the ideal vision of a marketplace, such as the one Martial evokes in *Ep.* 13.3. Martial’s collection also offers an echo of perhaps the ultimate Flavian text about the things of the everyday world: Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*. Part agricultural manual, part digest of scientific writing, part inventory of global imports and exports, the *Natural History* is a monumental work, the longest surviving piece of continuous Latin prose. The text overwhelms the reader with numbers; its scale, both geographical and chronological, is immense. Arguably, the *Natural History* is a monument of Flavian Rome, a textual counterpart to the Temple of Peace or the Flavian Amphitheater.

Pliny the Elder, a loyal partisan of Vespasian (Syme 1969; Naas 2002, 86) hopes that his text will prove useful to the emperor as well as to more humble readers (*humili vulgo*) who might consult it, such as students, farmers, and craftsmen (*NH* pr. 6). In Carey’s term (2003), Pliny provides, in effect, a catalog of culture, including the unusual alongside the banal. Everyday things and practices are also worthy of preservation in the repository of the *Natural History*, because they are all components of Roman culture, and therefore, of Rome’s dominion over the world. As Murphy (2004, 7), notes, “In pursuit of cultural meaning, fish and sewers are as valuable as Caesar and Cicero.”

From literally thousands of examples, here are two, the first of which, on the topic of the shape and structure of fruits, piles up an abundance of fruit and describes the various pleasures of consumption; the second describes the making of particular types of bread:

Some fruits have a three-part structure – there is flesh and then the shell and then again a seed inside the shell – for instance, peaches. Some fruits grow in clusters, for instance grapes and sorbs, the latter clinging all around the branches and weighing them down, like grapes; but others hang separately, as in the case of the peach. Some fruits are contained in a matrix, like pomegranates; some hang down from a stalk, for instance pears, others hang down in bunches, like grapes and dates ... Then again fruits have a variety of attractions to recommend them. Dates please us by the flesh, but the dates of the Thebaid by their hard skin; grapes and nut-dates by their juice, pears and apples by their firm flesh, mulberries by their substance, nuts by their solid interior, certain fruits in Egypt by their pips, Carian figs by their skin: this is removed from green figs as refuse but in dried figs it is very agreeable.

Plin. *NH* 15.114–7

The excellence of the finest kinds of bread depends principally on the goodness of the wheat, and the fineness of the sifter. Some persons knead the dough with eggs or milk, and butter even has been employed for the purpose by nations that have had leisure to cultivate the arts of peace, and to give their attention to the art of making pastry. Picenum still maintains its ancient reputation for making the bread that it was the first to invent, *alica* being the grain employed. The flour is kept in soak for nine days, and is kneaded on the tenth with raisin juice, in the shape of long rolls; after which it is baked in an oven in earthen pots, till they break. This bread, however, is never eaten till it has been well soaked, which is mostly done in milk mixed with honey.⁶

Plin. *NH* 18.27

The *Natural History* can read like a morass of details but is, on the whole, logically organized in thematic groups. Each encyclopedia entry is essentially discrete, and brings close focus onto an object, be it a plant, a stone, a fish, or a raw material. In sum, however, the effect is one of unending abundance and availability. In this text, the aesthetic of the everyday – close and careful attention paid to the sensuous aspects of the preparation and consumption of food, dining practices, habitual activities using ordinary objects – dovetails with Flavian ideology by displaying the abundance and availability of supplies and the pleasures of enjoying those supplies, be they simple or special. Similar to Martial's playful and gentle Saturnalian text, the *Natural History* celebrates the minute details of daily life in a world of peace and economic prosperity, brought to you by the Flavians. Just as Domitian's palace contained all of the most beautiful and expensive marbles of the world, the Flavian Rome imagined in Martial and Pliny contains all of the goods of Italy and the empire: provincial products are available everyday at Rome, or are, in fact, assimilated into the everyday. 59 of the *Xenia* (46%) and 42 of the *Apophoreta* (19%) identify the provenance of an object, and implicitly its use at Rome. The two examples below illustrate this quite clearly:

14.99 *Bascauda*

Barbara de pictis veni bascauda Britannis,
sed me iam mavult dicere Roma suam.

Basket: I have come, a barbarian basket, from the painted Britons, but now Rome prefers to call me hers.

14.26 *Crines*

Chattica Teutonicos accendit spuma capillos:
captivis poteris cultior esse comis.

Hair: Chattian foam brightens German tresses; you can be more kapow! with POW hair.

The collection of things available to the reader paints the picture of a comprehensive and satisfying relationship to the physical world that provides everything needed for the Romans' continuing comfort and consumption. There is no desire expressed for the objects of the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*: they are always already to hand. Similarly the painted *xenia* continue to enrich the walls of Campanian villas long after their real counterparts have been consumed. Each of these "texts" – the *xenia*, Martial's *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, and Pliny's *Natural History* – perform a world of comfort and contentment by drawing ordinary objects and activities into the spotlight, drawing the attention of the viewer to what would ordinarily be overlooked, and thus aestheticizing the everyday.

On the one hand, the valorization in these "texts" of the ordinary, simple, and practical resonates with Vespasian's well-known austerity and rejection of the luxurious excesses of his predecessors. Each one of them celebrates the pleasures of these ordinary objects, and the art of consumption. The underlying economic message of the texts also serves to celebrate Flavian prosperity and the continued global dominance of Flavian Rome over the material culture of its imperial domain.

On the other hand, however, ordinary life, as the Marxist-influenced theorists who first brought critical philosophical attention to it knew, is the domain of ordinary people (for example, Lefebvre 1947; de Certeau 1984; Sheringham 2006). The space of everyday life is in the streets and in the domestic sphere. Ordinary life consists in routine, assiduous labor, primarily done by the working class: poor men, women, children, and slaves. The aestheticization of everyday life described earlier in this chapter is careful to eliminate these aspects, as the everyday serves instead to stand for luxurious consumption, purchasing power, and Flavian control of global resources. As the human labor required to prepare and produce food is excised from the picture, the costs of production are obscured by the pleasures of consumption.

The monumental public works of the Flavian period have dominated discussion of Flavian aesthetics. Closer attention to marginal texts, that is, the minor genres in both art and literature, can help to fill in the picture of the tastes of the time. Reconstructing an aesthetic by triangulating information from multiple and diverse sources is a difficult project; this endeavor becomes very complex when one attempts to account for social distinctions within this aesthetic: who is creating these images and texts and for whom? Who is the audience? How did Romans and non-Romans of different gender, age, status, and ethnicity perceive these representations? Despite Martial's claim that everyone in the world came together to join single-mindedly in appreciation of the imperial spectacle at the Flavian Amphitheater (*Spect.* 3), many questions remain about the sensory and aesthetic world outside of the world rebuilt by the Flavian imperial house at Rome.

NOTES

- 1 Suet. *Dom.* 13.2–3 gives a glimpse of the popular reaction to this: “Domitian erected so many passage-ways and arches with chariot-statues and triumphal decorations throughout so many parts of the city that on one of them someone wrote *ARCI*, but in Greek letters.” As critics have long recognized, the graffito is a bilingual pun: *arci* is a transliteration of Greek ἀρκεί, “Enough!”
- 2 Evidence for Vespasianic austerity in the material record might be found in his portraiture, for example the veristic portrait of the “canny general” in the Copenhagen Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (Fig. 3.1, on which see CHAPTER 7, PUBLIC IMAGES OF THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY, section 1). One example of an attempt to illustrate this cultural shift: D’Arms (2003, 124) analyzes the list of names of villa owners on the Bay of Naples. Of the 47 names, 45 are datable to a particular period. 17 names can be linked to the Julio-Claudian era, while 12 are of the Flavian period. Accounting for the difference in length between these two eras, there is no demonstrable decline in luxury villa owning among wealthy Italians (such as Silius Italicus) in the Flavian period.
- 3 Augustus enjoyed raffling off *apophoreta* of wildly different values to his guests (Suet. *Aug.* 75) and Trimalchio also distributes *apophoreta* to his guests, accompanied with riddling labels (*pittacia*) (Petr. *Sat.* 56.8).
- 4 *Quo vis cumque loco potes hunc finire libellum/versibus explicitum est omne duobus opus./lemmata si quaeris cur sint ascripta, docebo:/ut, si malueris, lemmata sola legas.* (You can finish this book in whatever place you like; each piece is unfolded in two lines. If you ask why there are headings written above, I’ll tell you: so that, if you prefer, you can just read the headings.) (14.2).
- 5 The collection also ends with a poem honoring Domitian: 13.127 *Coroneae Roseae/dat festinat, Caesar, tibi bruma coronas:/quondam veris erat, nunc tua facta rosa est.* (Winter gives you forced garlands, Caesar. Although it was once spring’s, the rose is now yours.) Leary (2001, 49) notes that “the fact that Martial’s praise is confined here to just a couplet is remarkably innovative and even daring: panegyric was usually lengthy.”
- 6 Martial also includes a poem on Picentine bread, comparing its preparation to another common household object, the sponge. *Panes Picentini* (*Ep.* 13.47) *Picentina Ceres niveo sic nectare crescit/ut levis accepta spongea turget aqua.* (Picentine bread grows with its white nectar, just as a light sponge swells when it has soaked up water.)

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FURTHER READING

Croisille (1965) remains the most comprehensive collection of the still life paintings found throughout Campania. It can be supplemented with a more recent discussion of the same topic in the chapter "Natures mortes" in Croisille (2005), 228–44. Also of interest is the shorter, but more

beautifully illustrated, study of De Caro (2001). A thorough analysis of the socio-cultural aspects of the Campanian wall-paintings is provided by Leach (2004). On Roman art in the domestic sphere generally, see the various essays in Gazda (2010). On art and aesthetics connected with lower class or ordinary Romans, see Clarke (2003), along with Métraux and D'Ambra (2006). R. Bianchi Bandinelli's (1970) theory of "plebeian art" in his survey of Roman art has been influential in this field. On the question of the "Flavian style" in art, see the discussion of Strocka (2010). Leary's twin commentaries on the *Apophoreta* (1996) and *Xenia* (2001) are an invaluable resource for reading these books of Martial's oeuvre.

CHAPTER 20

Flavian Spectacle: Paradox and Wonder

Helen Lovatt

Introduction

The Colosseum, as Hopkins and Beard (2005, vii) argue, “is the most famous, and instantly recognizable, monument to have survived from the classical world.” Gladiatorial games are only one part of the system of public spectacles which represented imperial power and created identity in the Roman empire. There were circus games, theatrical performances, parades, including triumphs, athletic games, musical, and poetic contests. In the arena, there were wild beast hunts, executions, and distributions of largesse along with gladiatorial bouts. This chapter explores the significance of spectacle in the Flavian period, and the contribution of Flavian emperors and writers to the buildings, performance and discourse of spectacle.

The Flavian Amphitheater was the first permanent amphitheater built in the center of Rome. The stone amphitheater of Statilius Taurus was outside the *pomerium* (sacred boundary of the city) in the Campus Martius (Welch 2007, 132; 108–27). In size and influence it erased the earlier amphitheater, which had in any case burnt down in the fire of 64 CE. For this reason alone, we associate the Flavian period with Roman spectacle. But were Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian particularly enthusiastic about and generous with their provision of spectacles? A survey of Suetonius reveals that the provision of games was seen as part of Vespasian’s generosity as he combated his reputation for miserliness (Suet. *Vesp.* 19). In Titus’ short reign, at least two sets of games are mentioned: the inauguration of the arena (Suet. *Tit.* 7.3; Cass. Dio 66.25) and those shortly before he died in which he is said to have wept (Suet. *Tit.* 10.1; also Cass. Dio 66.26.1). Domitian does seem to have been keenly aware of the importance of spectacle: “he constantly produced magnificent and luxurious spectacles not only in the amphitheater but also in the Circus” (Suet. *Dom.* 4.1). He re-established the quaestors’ games and held Secular Games, established a festival of poetry and athletics in Rome, the *Capitolia*, as well as the *Quinquatria* in honor of Minerva at his Alban villa.

However, this record does not particularly stand out compared with that of other emperors. This exercise of comparison must be indistinct and subjective: Augustus' *Res Gestae* give us the fullest account of the spectacles during the reign of one emperor, and we do not have a complete list of imperial events staged under any of the Flavian emperors (Coleman 2006, xlviii–l). Augustus used the power of spectacle as effectively as he used the power of images in surpassing the warlords of the late Republic and setting the bar for future *principes*: Suet. *Aug.* 43–5 details his engagement with spectacle. “In the frequency, variety and magnificence of his spectacles he surpassed all who had gone before” (Suet. *Aug.* 43.1). Vespasian's construction of the arena is represented as an Augustan move: “[he also made] an amphitheater in the middle of the city, as he understood Augustus had intended” (Suet. *Vesp.* 9.1), like Domitian's Secular Games. In the Flavian period, naval battles were still held in the Augustan lake, and Domitian's newly built stadium (now the Piazza Navona) made permanent Augustus' wooden construction for a show of athletes.

If the Flavian concern for spectacle was linked to Augustan precedent, a quest for legitimation as the spiritual if not literal successors of the first emperor, it was also in competition with Nero. The latter's obsession with games was presented as a mark of tyranny and a lack of Roman decorum. The Flavian Amphitheater itself was built on the site of the lake which had adorned Nero's Golden House (*Domus Aurea*), and reversed his appropriation of the city for his personal use by opening his private space for public enjoyment. As Martial's influential epigram put it:

Here, where the stellar Colossus sees the stars close at hand and the high contraptions grow
in the middle of the road, the hated palace of a wild king used to shine and one house used
to stand in the whole city ... Rome has been given back to herself, and with you as ruler,
Caesar, the delights belong to the people which used to be the delights of their master.

Mart. *Spect.* 2.1–4, 11–12

Beard and Hopkins (2005, 31) identify this as “a brilliantly calculated political gesture to obliterate Nero's memory with a monument to public entertainment,” even if, like all acts of *damnatio memoriae* (destruction of memory), the gesture itself draws attention to the act of erasure. The building, and the decision to construct it, make a vivid claim of difference in continuation from the Julio-Claudian dynasty.

The Flavians, then, are not so different from the Julio-Claudians, especially Augustus and Nero, in their enthusiasm for spectacle. Like Augustus, too, they were establishing legitimacy, and bringing the city back together after a viciously divisive period of civil war. They are not so different, either, from the emperors who came after, although Suetonius' biographies end with the reign of Domitian. Trajan gave at least two enormous and lavish sequences of spectacles: first at his inauguration (99–100 CE), and then at his Dacian triumph (107 CE; Cass. Dio 68.15; Bennett 1997, 102–3). As Titus paraded informers in the arena, according to Martial (*Spect.* 4), so Trajan exposed Domitian's informers and corrupt officials to public humiliation before disposing of them (Plin. *Pan.* 34).

We associate the Flavian regime particularly with Roman spectacle for a number of reasons: the building of the Colosseum; the survival of the only collection of Latin poetry on the theme of arena spectacle, Martial's *Liber Spectaculorum*; the existence of biographies by Suetonius for this period; the flowering of literature sponsored by

Domitian's effective patronage; the virtuoso account of the Judean triumph written by Josephus. This does not mean that the Flavian contribution to the history of Roman spectacle is without significance: as with the hardening of imperial power, so spectacle in this period was confirmed as a key element of the emperor's self-presentation and self-preservation. While Tiberius could scorn the games, later emperors could not.

Spectacles, whether in arena, circus or theater, were opportunities for the audience to display their opinions about and to those in power, even to challenge and negotiate with them. Under the imperial system, spectacle became even more important, as the traditional political structures were replaced by the rule of one man (Wiedemann 1992, 165–80). The crowd at *munera* (gladiatorial games) made the ultimate decision as to whether a defeated gladiator should live or die. Crowds complained about or demanded various things: they might ask for an end to particular wars (they could no longer give their opinions about this at *contiones* (meetings) summoned by tribunes); for instance, the war against Sextus Pompeius in 40 BCE was criticized in the circus, according to Cass. Dio 48.31.5 and Suet. *Aug.* 16.2; there was a protest against rises in the price of grain to Tiberius in the theater, according to Tac. *Ann.* 6.13; an audience even protested against the appropriation by Tiberius of a famous statue by Lysippus in the theater, mentioned at Plin. *NH* 34.62. It is notable that by the time of Domitian the anecdotes tend to reflect the danger of expressing the wrong opinion in the audience rather than the freedom of the audience to negotiate with the emperor. Pliny the Younger, for instance, in his *Panegyric* of the new emperor Trajan, when rejecting all things Domitianic, takes pleasure in the freedom of the gladiatorial audience to favor any type of gladiator (*Pan.* 33.3). In the *Agricola*, Tacitus presents Domitian watching the audience while they watch the executions of Mauricus, Rusticus, and Senecio for treasonous writings. “It was the chief part of our miseries to see and to be seen, to know that our sighs were being recorded, to have, ever ready to note the pallid looks of so many faces, that savage countenance reddened with the hue with which he defied shame” (Tac. *Agr.* 45.2, tr. Church and Brodribb). The power of the audience was significantly circumscribed, at least under Domitian.

1 The topography of spectacle

The building of the Flavian Amphitheater changed the face of the city of Rome and the place of spectacle in the city. It was the largest amphitheater built in the Roman world and dwarfed the human spectators and performers. Its four stories stood 50 m high. Standing at the meeting of four major roads, it dominated the Roman skyline “in much the same way that cathedrals later towered over medieval towns” (Welch 2007, 132). By putting the amphitheater in the middle of the city (*media urbe*), Vespasian acknowledged the centrality of spectacle in Roman identity. As a “magnificent feat of design and engineering” (Welch 2007, 134), the Flavian Amphitheater made a claim for the power and glory not just of the emperors who commissioned it, but also of the empire whose booty paid for it. In an inscription identified as the original dedicatory inscription of the building (Alföldy 1995), the amphitheater is explicitly built *ex manubiis* (from the spoils of war), a consciously archaizing phrase which evokes the Republican period. The Colosseum made manifest the power of the Flavians and the power of Rome.

The amphitheater promised a different attitude to spectacle from that of Nero: these would be Flavian spectacles. Nero was rather squeamish, and, according to Suetonius, was criticized for staging a show in which gladiators were not killed (Suet. *Nero* 12.1); he was no warrior, struggled to kill himself, and his foreign victories were in musical performances. In contrast, the label *ex manubiis* associates the amphitheater with the spoils of foreign conquest. Just as Augustus had drawn on Antony's connection with Cleopatra to make Actium a foreign and not a civil war, so the Flavians used the Judean rebellion to associate their accession to empire with foreign conquest rather than civil war.

Martial celebrates the amphitheater as Rome restored, while Nero's luxurious private house dispossessed the poor: but archaeological evidence points to the areas taken up by the Golden House as elite housing and commercial property. Welch argues that parts of the *Domus Aurea* must have been open to the public (Welch 2007, 153–7) and that it did not just put one man's luxurious countryside villa into the heart of urban space, but undermined the social hierarchies of Roman life, by allowing the lower echelons into what were once elite spaces. The amphitheater, and other spaces of spectacle, in contrast, put these stratifications of society on display: the Augustan *Lex Julia theatralis* (Suet. *Aug.* 44) organized seating into a highly regulated hierarchy (Rawson 1987). In the Colosseum, senators and Vestals sat in the front area, but in separate sections; soldiers and civilians sat in separate wedges; boys and tutors had their own *cuneus* (wedge). Those not wearing the toga were not allowed in the middle seats; women were relegated to the top seats (Futrell 1997, 161–2). Hopkins and Beard (2005, 111) point out that these divisions are likely to have been messier and less clear than scholars like to claim. The approximate space allocated to senators in the Colosseum might well have held 2000 people; since there were only about 600 senators, who were the rest of the people? Presumably an aggregate of sons and other (male) relatives, favored clients and guests, and perhaps servile attendants.

Access to the spectacles was probably by ticket (*tessera*); tickets survive for other amphitheaters and are likely to have been used in the Colosseum as well. What we know about the distribution of these tickets suggests that they were handed out by patrons to clients. Cicero, for instance, discusses whether Murena's indiscriminate distribution of seats at spectacles constitutes an effort to bribe the electorate (Cic. *Mur.* 72–3; Futrell 1997, 161–7). Thus even attending the spectacles at all suggests a complicity with power systems; those seated were on display to others, watching the audience as much as the spectacle (Clavel-Lévêque 1984).

The Flavian Amphitheater was not the only building associated with spectacle that was built or restored in the Flavian period. Domitian restored the Circus Maximus (*Ann.* 15.38, Suet. *Dom.* 5; Jones 1992, 86). He was enthusiastic about chariot racing, and reduced the number of laps to fit in 100 races during the day (Suet. *Dom.* 4). His newly built Stadium for athletic competitions in the Campus Martius was teamed with an Odeum for musical competitions, which held 5000 spectators (Suet. *Dom.* 5; Cass. Dio 69.4.1; Amm. Marc. 16.10.14). Along with the confident Romanness of the Colosseum comes a newly unflinching philhellenism, which meant that the set of four-yearly Greek games at Rome founded by Domitian, the *Capitolia*, were not criticized as the *Neronia* had been, and that they survived the death (and *damnatio memoriae*) of their creator.

Buildings associated with spectacle, then, were a high priority in the Flavian building program. They formed a response to the Neronian regime, while claiming continuity

with Augustus. They offered a secure place in the hierarchy to the elite, while giving the people their *panem et circenses* (bread and circuses, Juv. *Sat.* 10.81).

2 Encapsulating spectacle: Martial *Liber Spectaculorum*

The sequence of epigrams preserved in medieval anthologies and now known as the *Liber Spectaculorum* (or the *De Spectaculis*) of Martial presents a snapshot of the discourse of spectacle in the Flavian period. Coleman (2006) argues that this collection probably brought together a number of smaller collections (*libelli*), along with other related epigrams, which had been presented to emperors (Titus and Domitian) to commemorate various arena spectacles. *Spect.* 1–5 and 34 seem to relate to the inauguration of the Flavian Amphitheater, while others evoke the reign of Domitian, particularly those about the exploits of a rhinoceros (11 and 26), which was celebrated on Domitian's coinage. This collection was probably published before Martial's more famous heterogeneous numbered collections, perhaps even launching his career as a poet. No one has written anything quite like it since.

The *Liber Spectaculorum* begins and ends with *labor* (hard work) and imperial achievement. In the first epigram, Martial represents the Flavian Amphitheater as a wonder of the world:

Let barbarian Memphis keep silent about the wonder of the pyramids; Assyrian labor should not boast about Babylon ... all labor yields to Caesar's amphitheater: let Fama tell of one masterpiece in place of all.

Mart. *Spect.* 1.1–2, 7–8

Rome's worldwide dominance is represented by this, Rome's wonder, taking over from all the wonders elsewhere. Egypt, Assyria, Greece: all now yield to Rome. The amphitheater is a spectacle for the world. Equally Rome has succeeded to the dominance of earlier empires. Rome's spectacle has been achieved by *labor*, the key word of Virgil's *Georgics*. The involvement of *Fama* (rumor, renown, fame, tradition) gives an epic overtone to Martial's epigrammatic praise: the poem is small but the *labor* is huge. *Epigram* 34 is the last epigram as transmitted by the manuscripts, and takes us back to Augustus, and the watery spectacles at the Augustan *stagnum* (lake), a venue even larger than the amphitheater, and site during Titus' inaugural ceremony of three days of spectacles, one watery and two on an enormous platform over the water (Suet. *Tit.* 7.3; Cass. Dio 66.25.2–4; Coleman 2006, 250–2). Martial makes this the ultimate spectacle, trumping not only Augustus and Nero, but even the Flavian Amphitheater itself:

The *labor* of Augustus took place here, to set fleets in conflict and stir up the straits with naval trumpet. What part of our Caesar's achievement is this? ... Whatever is seen in circus and amphitheater the rich waves have provided at Caesar's trumpet. Let Fucinus and Trojan Nero's pools keep silence: the ages will have known this one naval battle.

Mart. *Spect.* 34.1–3, 9–12

The play on land and sea is also a feature of the spectacle celebrated in *Spect.* 27, which describes the Flavian Amphitheater being converted rapidly from land to sea and back

again, doubly surprising a spectator, recently arrived from far-off shores. The emperor's control over the natural world shows an almost divine power. Martial focuses on the belief and disbelief of the audience: the spectacle, like an ecphrasis, is beyond belief. He addresses the viewer (/reader) as an experienced audience member, wise in the ways of spectacle. This conceit emphasizes the worldwide pull of Titus' spectacle. Similarly, in *Spect.* 3, spectators from all over the world, complete with outlandish costumes and implausible ethnographic habits, have come to Rome and are now to be found in the amphitheater, turning the audience into a spectacle not just of Roman society but Roman centrality in the world. In a babel of different tongues, the audience can all speak praise of the emperor: "The diverse voices of the peoples sound and yet, when you are hailed true father of the fatherland, then all speak as one." (3.11–12) So the experience of spectacle creates political unity (or the appearance of unity). If you can't speak in praise of the emperor, you keep silent.

The emperor is at the center of Martial's spectacles, the most important marvel, for whom all marvels are created. If, as seems likely, these poems were presented to the emperor in smaller collections, each focusing on a particular occasion, as a whole they put on display Martial's praise of, and his privileged relationship with, the emperor. Martial is the impresario who presents the poems, creates this poetic world, just as the emperor produces and creates the world of the spectacles. The amphitheater is "Caesar's amphitheater" (*Spect.* 1.7); Rome has been restored "with Caesar in command" (2.11); the city to which the world has come is "the city of Caesar" (3.1–2). We do not, however, look at the figure of the emperor himself: we see the emperor through the spectacles and wonders that he has the power to create.

Caesar is the ideal audience of both spectacles and epigrams: in *Spect.* 11 the rhinoceros is displayed for the emperor ("for you, Caesar", 11.1); Caesar is present as the addressee of the poem, but does no other work in it. In 24, similarly, the display of a criminal as Orpheus being torn apart by a bear is for Caesar: "the arena shows it to you, Caesar" (24.2). The emperor as addressee opens all these epigrams, and as audience guarantees the wonder of the spectacles and the importance of the poetry.

Other epigrams take his involvement further: he is the creator as well as the sponsor of the show, in a move similar to the idea of the *poeta creator* (the poet who is imagined actually to carry out the actions described in his poetry). Here Caesar does more than pay for the show, he is envisaged as creating it. In *Spect.* 14 a pregnant sow is given an impromptu Caesarean by a spear: this takes place "during the savage struggles of Caesarean Diana" (14.1). Diana stands for the hunting, but she now belongs to the emperor: it is the emperor's hunt. In another mythical reenactment (*Spect.* 28), a Leander figure, who should have drowned in his "Hellespont" as he swims across to his Hero, is spared by the waves. Martial's comment: "Cease to wonder: it was Caesar's wave" (*Spect.* 28.2). The clemency of the emperor is displayed by the wave in his show, implying that the waters are an extension of his will.

The emperor's clemency and generosity are displayed in his relationship with the audience, standing in for the people as a whole: as producer of the show he must arbitrate between the conflicting demands. Martial's Caesar surpasses their expectations in *Spect.* 28 by granting the wishes of both sides, putting both beast-fighters, Myrinus and Triumphus, on stage: two stars for the price of one. Similarly in *Spect.* 31 two great gladiators fight each other for such a long time that the audience demand their release.

But the emperor has set up a rule for these games: they must fight until one gives in. Miraculously, they both yield at the same time, and he can grant them both victory and the *rudis* (wooden staff) which symbolizes their release from the arena. The emperor, like the epic Jupiter, is constrained by fate (or his own previous decisions), but unlike Jupiter is able to arrange for his favorites to survive. In another poem of the collection, Martial turns the emperor into a god superior to Jupiter:

A bull had borne Europa through his brother's sea:
but now a bull has raised Alcides to the stars.
Compare now, Fama, the cattle of Caesar and Jove:
while they raised equal burdens, that one raised his higher.
Mart. *Spect.* 19

It is hard to guess exactly what spectacle this describes, but the terms of the comparison could not be clearer. Caesar's bull is more impressive than Jupiter's bull. The bull encapsulates imperial power, just as the bull is Jupiter transformed. It is important that *Fama* does the comparing: the author does not take credit for this potentially blasphemous claim, but leaves it up to rumor, while emphasizing the fact that the spectacle deserves a worldwide audience, and implying that the spectacles enshrine epic feats.

The living emperor became more unashamed about claiming divinity, or allowing others to do so for him, during the Flavian period. The emperor as ideal audience of spectacle matches the gods as ideal audience of myth, especially in epic. A sequence of poems near the beginning of the collection (*Spect.* 6, 7, 8) plays with the idea of the emperor recreating and surpassing myth. In 6, the spectacles of the arena compete with the figures of *Vetustas* (Age) and *Fama*: by restaging Pasiphae's intercourse with a bull, the emperor's show has turned myth into reality. We might have doubted whether it was possible, but now "we have seen it" (*Spect.* 6.2). Although, of course, we have not in fact seen it, only read Martial's description of it; Coleman (2006, xlv) wonders whether Martial might not be "simply inventing a string of scenarios as vehicles for his wit and ingenuity." Possibly, but the panegyric aim seems to weigh against this possibility. The reality of the emperor's power is underscored by the ability of his spectacle to be more than empty show, guaranteed by the ruptured bodies of animals and human beings.

The marvelous antics of animals that recognize the power of the emperor and authenticate it because they are incapable of flattery, are the subject of numerous epigrams. For instance, an elephant kneels in worship of the emperor. Martial emphasizes that it was not commanded or instructed but recognizes the emperor as a god: "he too feels our god" (*Spect.* 20.4). This emphasis draws attention to its own artifice: the elephant must have been trained. In *Spect.* 33, a doe is pursued by hounds, which spare her when she stops in front of Caesar, showing again the trope of recognition and authentication (animals cannot dissemble), along with the idea of Caesar's clemency: "Caesar has divine power: this is sacred, sacred power. Believe it: wild animals have not learnt to lie" (*Spect.* 33.7–8). The divine power of the sponsor is felt in the behavior of the animals. The emperor pervades the cosmos, making the spectacle reality, not just a show.

Flavian spectacle in Martial is imperial spectacle: produced and created by the emperor, praising the emperor, putting the emperor on display. The Roman empire, too, is on

show: the amphitheater is the world in miniature, Roman society, Roman empire, the gods and nature. The audience represents the world; *Fama* increases the reach of the spectacles in time and space, as far as posterity. The emperor's divine power in creating and embodying the spectacles surpasses the workings of nature and the power of the gods. Martial continually plays with ideas of belief and disbelief, truth and lies, flattery and praise: the show is made real by animals and bodies; myth is no longer mythical, but enters the world of reality. In this attempt to go beyond, however, the hyperbolic discourse of praise draws attention to its own artificiality.

3 A Flavian parade: Josephus on the Judean triumph

Spectacle is not just gladiatorial games. The amphitheater contained a variety of shows; Martial talks more frequently of animal shows and naval battles than of gladiators. Another very important Greek and Roman spectacle was the parade. Parades are more inclusive than shows: they do not require tickets. They mark moments of social integration, can involve huge numbers of participants and spectators, and offer an opportunity for creating cultural identity.

We are fortunate enough to have a vivid and detailed, probably eyewitness, description of the most lavish and significant Flavian parade: the triumph of Vespasian and Titus over Judea in 71 CE. The triumph is a ritual that celebrates the outstanding victory of a Roman general. The general rides through the streets of Rome with his army, their captives, and spoils, and makes a sacrifice at the Capitoline Hill. The description of this particular triumph was written by Flavius Josephus, both insider and outsider, victor and victim. As a Jewish aristocrat and rebel leader who had been defeated and captured, he could have been on display in the triumph. Instead, however, he had prophesied the imperial power of Vespasian and Titus, and became one of their favored clients. He is the ultimate Flavian writer, *Flavius* even by name, the walking (and writing) incarnation of the twists and turns of fortune that stand at the center of the triumph: the enemy generals have fallen from the heights of power and success into slavery and death; the *triumphator* is encouraged to remember that the same thing might easily happen to him.

Josephus' description (*BJ* 7.120–62) begins with the return of Titus to Rome, his reunion with his father and brother, and the audience gathering. The army is drawn up, in companies and divisions, and at dawn Vespasian and Titus, crowned with laurel and dressed in purple robes, meet the senate, equestrians, and magistrates, who then acclaim them along with the army. After prayer and sacrifice, they dress in triumphal robes, and the procession begins: through the Porta Triumphalis (triumphal gate), and in this case to three theaters on the Campus Martius, before continuing to the Circus Maximus and into the Forum. Josephus gives the fullest surviving account of the triumphal route. He describes in detail the profusion of spoils and captives: there is silver, gold, and ivory; there are tapestries; jewels; crowns; images of conquered gods, animals decked out in clothes; captives, all also dressed richly. Most striking for Josephus are the enormous floats (*pegmata*) on which are portrayed events from the war, and the devastation of Judea, walls demolished, temples on fire, a landscape flowing with blood. The most conspicuous spoils were the sacred treasures from the Temple of Jerusalem. Finally the

procession ends at the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus where the defeated general, Simon bar Gioras, is executed to universal applause. The day finishes with sacrifices and banquets, and Josephus gives his own assessment of the significance of the ceremony for the Roman people:

On this day the Roman city celebrated a festival for victory over the armies of her enemies,
for the end of her internal dissensions, and the beginning of hopes for well-being.

Joseph. *BJ* 7.157

Finally, he describes Vespasian's later construction of the Temple of Peace (dedicated in 75 CE), in which many of the spoils were displayed. This is a parade that lives on in monumental commemoration.

This spectacle, and Josephus' account of it, has many similarities with the arena spectacles presented by Martial. At the heart of both is praise, of the emperors, and the Roman people. Josephus emphasizes the unanimity of the three Flavians: at *BJ* 7.120–1 the crowd rejoice at the sight of the three together; at 128–9 Titus mirrors Vespasian's prayers; at 152 Domitian rides beside them, equally magnificent and spectacular. Despite the excessiveness of the spectacle, Josephus finds ways to bring out Flavian modesty: the senate had voted them each an individual triumph, but they chose to have just the one (121); Vespasian does not allow the crowd full rein in their desire for acclamation (127). There is a strong emphasis on tradition: just as the construction of the Colosseum is presented as an Augustan move, so the triumph is presented as traditional in every way: they wear traditional purple robes (124); recite customary prayers (128); pass through the gate which derived its name from its role in triumphs of the past (130); the execution of Simon is represented as carried out according to time-honored custom (153) in the location required by Roman law (154). All serve to emphasize the Flavian message of preserving traditions in the new regime.

Another synergy with Martial's portrayal of the arena is the empire on display, the world in one show. The marvelous spoils bring together the wealth of the world, the productions of all nations, to make manifest the greatness of Roman rule (133). Similarly the collection in Vespasian's Temple of Peace brings together precious objects from all over the world: "objects for the sight of which men had once wandered over the whole world, eager to see them one at a time, while they lay in various countries" (160). The audience is imagined as the whole city: "Not one of the measureless multitude in the city was left at home"; there were so many spectators that there was only just room for the objects of their gaze to pass through the crowd (122). The parade went through the theaters to give a better view to the huge number of spectators (131).

This parade is a spectacle, and Josephus' description is a self-conscious ecphrasis of a spectacle. In 132 he declares his inability to describe (one of the standard tropes of ecphrastic description): "It is impossible to tell in a worthwhile way the multitude of wondrous sights and their magnificence in every aspect which one might conceive, both in the workmanship of the crafts, the variety of wealth, the rarities of nature" (132). So many rare objects are on display that spectators might cease to believe that they are in fact rare (135). He offers his readers a tantalizing promise of a sort of presence at the spectacle, only to pull it away with the declaration of his own descriptive inadequacy. He

can only convey the enormity of the spectacle by refusing to convey it. This engagement with representation and reality, like Martial's fascination with myth made real, intensifies in the section on the painted floats, which pictured the slaughter and destruction so vividly that those watching could feel like they were "happening before their eyes" (146). But Josephus in fact can offer us a more potent vision by describing the destruction of his own people poignantly and powerfully, using the imagery of the triumph as a *mise en abyme* of his own text, a lament for Judea. This effect is augmented by his detailed and deadpan description of the most sacred Jewish treasures for a non-Jewish audience, as the climax of the whole parade.

There is a tension between the surface of the spectacle and its underlying significance: adjectives such as "prosperous" (*eudaimona*) in his description of the countryside now destroyed, reveal Josephus' narrative agenda. The uncountable deluge of spoils carried in the Roman parade is compared to a river (134); the final image of the Roman desolation of Judea is that of "rivers flowing, not over cultivated land, nor supplying drink to man and beast, but across a country still on every side in flames" (145). This is a lament as much as a celebration. Beard (2003, 552) observes that "Josephus' account offers us a (victim's) glimpse of Roman conquest as unstoppably *elemental*; imperialism natural(ized)." But the contrast with the unnatural rivers set among flames reverses this naturalization, showing not just the greatness of the enemies destroyed by the triumphant generals and Roman people, but also the scale and inhumanity of the devastation.

This tension between the spectacular and the horrific is also brought out in the description of the captives: "Moreover, even among the mob of captives, none was to be seen unadorned, the variety and beauty of their dresses concealing from view any unsightliness arising from bodily disfigurement" (138). Captives on display at triumphs must be beautiful and perfect, like animals about to be sacrificed, again emphasizing the glory of their conquest. But Josephus takes us under the surface of the illusion to the physical suffering beneath.

Josephus may be, as Beard implies (2003, 556), a "lackey" who gives us the "official" Flavian version of events; but he can equally be read as conforming to the public discourse of praise, while leaving open other emotional reactions, particularly the opportunity for lament. Alternatively, as Beard points out in her later discussion, Roman militarism is rarely without a sense of disquiet with itself: the cost of war, as at the end of Virgil's *Aeneid*. "The most militaristic societies can also be – and often are – those that query most energetically the nature and discontents of their own militarism" (Beard 2007, 139). Is Josephus' Jewish perspective another aspect of his oneness with Roman culture?

There is a particular self-consciousness about the response to spectacle in the Flavian period, an awareness of its propensity to escape our grasp, of "the collapsing boundary between representation and reality" (Beard 2003, 550). Just as praise can always slide into criticism, triumph contains the inevitable underside of defeat, the potential seeds of future self-destruction, particularly appropriate in a situation in which, as Josephus astutely implies, the foreign war is used to cover up Roman civil strife. The factionalism of the Jews, which led to their own destruction, forms the climax of Josephus' account of the triumph, and offers a subtle and subdued undercurrent of anxiety to the river of Roman triumph.

4 Spectacle and society in Flavian epic

We have examined representations of and responses to real spectacles: what can we learn from the use of spectacle in the largely imaginary worlds of Flavian epic? Flavian epic is not lacking in spectacle. In particular it has been disliked for its excessive violence. Zissos (2003) has read the Flavian *Argonautica* as an amphitheatrical text, which responds to the disempowerment of the Roman elite and focuses on “[p]olitically charged narrative elements such as tyranny and resistance, political suicide and dissimulation.” Yet spectacle and its viewing can be a powerful tool of social cohesion and conformity, as Feldherr (1995) shows through the Virgilian ship race in *Aeneid* 5. On the other hand, Leigh (1997) approaches Lucan through his use of spectatorship at arena spectacle as a model for reading epic. In Leigh’s reading, gladiatorial viewing deadens audience response and inhibits action and political engagement.

There are many theories of viewing which could be applied both to real spectacles and to representations of them. Fagan (2011) offers a broad survey of various sociological and psychological approaches to the question of why Romans watched arena spectacle. He emphasizes the range, variety, and shifting nature of likely audience responses to the beast hunts, executions, and gladiatorial battles of the arena. He discusses the shared identity of the crowd, resulting in euphoric “effervescence,” and a sense of imagined community, like that of the nested audiences of Virgil’s ship race. The rule- and ritual-bound framework of the spectacles produces a distancing frame, which allows audiences to experience otherwise too risky, intense, and destructive emotions. Using ideas of “alignment,” Fagan suggests that audiences identified emotionally with “good” participants, while desiring the punishment of the “bad.” Finally he brings out the process of “entrainment,” in which the enthusiastic support of the audience intensifies the violence and competitiveness of the fighters, which in turn reinforces the audience engagement, producing a mutually reinforcing cycle of intensification. Another useful concept is that of “cognitive synergies,” in which paradox, striking reversals and contrasts, create a particularly powerful emotional engagement.

In this section I will briefly examine three passages from Flavian epic in the light of these ideas, and the discussion earlier in this chapter of Flavian attitudes to spectacle: Valerius Flaccus’ description of the boxing match of Amycus and Pollux at *Arg.* 4.99–343, the triumph of Scipio at Silius’ *Pun.* 17.625–54 and that of Theseus at Statius’ *Theb.* 12.519–42. The increasing availability and popularity of violent spectacle and literature re-creating it can be argued to have led to desensitization and an ever-increasing search for novelty and excess in response. But how different is Flavian epic really from its predecessors? Stover (2012) argues that Valerius Flaccus uses Lucan to set up a contrast with his own recuperation of imperial power: Vespasian represents a renewal of the Virgilian and Augustan ideal after the excesses of Lucanian civil war. But this reading is diametrically opposed to that of, for instance, Zissos (2003). Does Flavian epic use amphitheatrical viewing differently from Neronian and Augustan epic? Or does it continue in Lucan’s footsteps?

The boxing match between the king of Bebrycia, Amycus, and Pollux, son of Jupiter and star-like member of the Argonauts, is a well-known part of the Argonautic myth. Valerius Flaccus’ version draws not only on the equivalent passage in Apollonius, and the

Theocritean version, but also boxing matches in the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* (Lovatt 2005, 141–62). Valerius self-consciously doubles and complicates his battle, increasing the build-up, lengthening and making more violent the fatal fight itself. Zissos (2003) argues that it becomes an amphitheatrical spectacle: certainly the word *spectacula*, used at 259, where the ghosts of his former victims are allowed up to watch his deserved punishment, does imply that this is like an arena execution. But *spectacula* is not just used for gladiators: in fact it is often accompanied by a qualifying adjective, or location, to specify what sort of spectacle it is. This fight, like the gladiatorial battles themselves, and other combat sports, operates on the boundaries between battle and sport. Boxing is an athletic contest, but the simile at 227–31 emphasizes that this is no normal boxing match at Olympia: the prize is death.

Other aspects are certainly amphitheatrical: the speech of Dymas acts like an advertising bill, to raise expectations and sell the fight. The body of Amycus itself is presented as a spectacle that overcomes the sight of the other Argonauts and makes Pollux marvel (246–7). The phrase “bitter hatreds rise up in those formerly unknown to each other” (254–5) is more appropriate for a gladiatorial battle than a heroic duel. The differentiation of Pollux and Amycus, son of Jupiter and son of Neptune, beautiful boy and enormous monster, is reminiscent of the pairings of very different types of gladiators.

The audience are certainly drawn into the spectacle: at 278–9 neither his land nor his people recognize the failing Amycus; when Pollux feints and lands a successful blow to the head, his friends all shout together with joy (292). There is even some sense of the interactions between audience and fighters: Amycus’ rage is intensified by his awareness of the rejoicing Argonauts (297–8). The euphoria of the Argonauts after the battle cannot be overstated (324–9; 341–3).

Not all watchers feel the same way, however: the Bebrycians appear to be largely silent, and at the end of the fight they scatter immediately and take to the mountains. Valerius emphasizes that, in contrast to the version of Apollonius in which they fight the Argonauts after the death of their king, no love is lost here (315–6). No rejoicing, either however: the two sides are not brought together by their experience of watching the spectacle. Neither are we given any sense of the rejoicing of the ghosts, who remain an elusive presence.

The absconding Bebrycians do not rehabilitate Amycus: he is clearly tyrannical, and we are not meant to like him. But they do not help us to share in the euphoria of the Argonauts either. Rather they offer a hint of the Argonauts as threat: are they civilizers or marauders? The Argonauts are in fact concerned with their own survival and glory, not the well-being of any society. As Josephus’ spectators worry that the enormous floats might fall on them, so spectators at the arena would feel very differently about the gladiators in the event of a revolt. There is no safe frame for the audience here. Valerius, then, does not offer a Virgilian unanimity, though his audiences are not as ambivalent as those of Statius (Lovatt 2005, 80–100).

I finish by turning to the triumphs in Statius and Silius, which can be read as mutually reinforcing vehicles of Flavian propaganda. What difference does it make to our political reading of the two poems to treat these triumphs as spectacles, part of the discourse of Flavian spectacle? On the one hand, both Silius’ Scipio and Statius’ Theseus are designed as imperial figures, acting as the *deus ex machina* for their respective narratives. The Judean triumph, if it had not been in the minds of the poets, would surely have been in

the minds of their Roman readers. Finishing with a triumph equates to finishing with a Flavian gesture. This is particularly true of Silius, whose triumph really does form the last lines of the *Punica*. The panegyric gestures abound, from the glances back to the “real” end of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, with the figure of Augustus watching his own triple triumph at *Aen.* 8.714–6, to comparisons with Bacchus, Hercules, and Romulus (all about to become gods), and Camillus, another re-founder of Rome, to the last two words of the poem *Roma Tonantis*, which sets Rome next to and belonging to the Thunderer, with Scipio as his son, and Silius as his poet, the key link between them.

However, the elusiveness of triumph as spectacle remains. Tipping (2010, 185–92) persuasively catalogs the slippery side of Silius’ triumph of exemplarity. I want to highlight the audience response: the main audience of the battle of Zama was Hannibal, sequestered on a hill and disempowered; immediately before the triumph, Scipio’s burning of the Carthaginian ships becomes a wonder and a savage spectacle (*saeva spectacula*, 17.622) for the Carthaginians; as if setting the sea itself alight, it terrifies Nereus too. We might use this to bolster the connections with Flavian imperial power over nature, gods as audience of imperial spectacle, and to suggest an implicit danger to the watching audience. When the focus of the triumph moves on to the Roman audience, they desire nothing more than to see Hannibal: “but no other sight held the eyes and minds more than the view of Hannibal the fields fleeing, an image (*fugientis imago*)” (*Pun.* 17.643–4).

I have retained the word order despite the awkwardness in the translation in order to bring out the sense here not just of Hannibal as image of flight, but also of triumph as fleeting image. There is no Hannibal to execute, just an image. This should be the triumphant climax of the triumph, but it recedes into ecphrastic deferral. Similarly, the face of Scipio is out of our reach: it may be *Martia spectanda ora* (“the martial face which must be seen,” 646) but what we receive instead is a series of images and comparisons, which are themselves frustratingly difficult to pin down. Scipio in purple and gold like Bacchus back from India risks impersonating too successfully the oriental other whom he has just conquered. So Hercules, not here evoking effeminacy, instead like the huge mass of the Giants he has just defeated, is now gigantic himself as he becomes a god. Silius’ final gesture, which inserts himself as apostrophizing poet, hailing the victor, into the triumph itself, seeks with the repetition of “not about to yield” to stabilize and fix triumphal indeterminacy, but even his final claim to divine authority represents itself as “not a lie”: the third last word, *mentitur* (lies), though negated in the previous line, allows the possibility that poetry is just spin, spectacle nothing but an empty show.

Statius’ triumph is rather different: after six books of marching to war and five books of war, the Theban fratricide is over: Polynices has killed Eteocles. The new ruler, Creon, in his wild grief over his dead son, refuses to allow burial of the Argive invaders, so the Argive women seek help from Athens. As they wait at the *Ara Clementiae* (Altar of Clemency), Theseus passes in a triumph for his conquest of the Amazons. This triumph is paradoxical in a number of ways: it allows for victory in a poem in which the celebration of victory would seem distasteful. The Thebans cannot celebrate the fratricidal climax of the main war of the poem, even though they have succeeded in putting the Argives to flight. Similarly, once Theseus has defeated Creon in Book 12, the priority is lament for the dead Argive heroes, not celebration of this (rather less than fully epic)

victory. So Theseus has his triumph for a different war, as a way of building him up in his role as positive monarch, successful epic hero and creator of the only sort of closure offered by the poem.

However, the triumph itself (12.519–39) and the audience's response to the triumph are rather disquieting. Gender is key to any reading of Book 12: a large part of it follows the exploits of the Argive women, as they repeat the march of their menfolk to Thebes, and offer a feminine alternative (Dietrich 1999). Antigone and Argia enact a reversal of brotherly enmity by forming a sisterly alliance in burying Polynices. However, the defeated captives on display in Theseus' triumph are Amazons, and the audience of the triumph is represented as female. Theseus arrives to a roar of the crowd (521–2) and first we see the spoils: *duri Mavortis imago* (image of hard Mars, 523). Statius reverses the fugitive image of Silius' triumph, instead offering objects, and then people, as guarantees of the reality of war. The presentation of the women themselves at 529–31, as unrepentant, refusing to behave like captives, still holding to their beliefs, is contrasted with the meekness of Hippolyte, pregnant and accepting her marriage to Theseus. Desire to view is split between Theseus himself with his white horses, and Hippolyte: and the viewers too are feminine. The Attic women look askance at Hippolyte, suspicious, perhaps, jealous, uncertain about her apparent conversion, or about the wisdom of the marriage. This disquiet looks forward to the tragedy of Hippolytus to come. The Argive women are also watching the triumph, and for them the sight evokes first wonder and then grief for their own defeated husbands (542).

This spectacle, then, brings out the double-edged nature of triumph, which must always evoke defeat. The euphoria of the in-crowd is always tempered by awareness of suffering: the “two voices” of Virgil's *Aeneid* may well be the two voices of militarism. What makes the triumphal parade so powerful is the stark juxtaposition of success and failure, victory and defeat, triumph and despair; similarly, the arena provides the same cognitive synergies, along with a narrative characterized by sudden reversals of fortune – arguably gladiatorial battle itself is readable as tragedy. The discourse of spectacle in Flavian Rome displays a keen awareness of this doubleness, from Martial's simultaneous birth and death, to Josephus' panegyric lament, and Statius' juxtaposition of different female perspectives on war.

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On the Colosseum, see Hopkins and Beard (2005); for more detail, Welch (2007). On topography see Millar (2005), Darwall-Smith (1996). On gladiators and spectatorship, see Fagan (2011). On Martial in general, see Fitzgerald (2007); on the *Liber Spectaculorum* see Coleman (2006). On Josephus see Edmondson, Mason, and Rives (2005); in particular Mason (2005) reads Josephus as using figured speech to give another dimension to his ostensibly Flavian text. On triumphs, see Beard (2007).

CHAPTER 21

Literary Culture

Antony Augoustakis

1 Continuity and change: the emperor and literary competitions

While the Flavians broadly sought to distance themselves from the reign of Nero, there were, inevitably, continuities in practices related to cultural patronage. A case in point is the strikingly similar promotion of literary activity under Nero and Domitian. For Fantham this pair's preoccupation with and fostering of the literary sphere stands in contrast to "the indifference of Vespasian and the short-lived Titus" (1996, 153). But "indifference" is surely too strong: a closer look at the literature produced under Vespasian and Titus reveals a close connection between these two emperors and many contemporary writers (Franchet D'Espèrey 1986). Authors such as Eprius Marcellus, Vibius Crispus, Pliny the Elder, and Flavius Josephus, enjoyed ties of friendship to the imperial house under the first two Flavian emperors. Tacitus reports that Vespasian gave 500 000 *sestertii* to the poet Saleius Bassus (*Dial.* 9.2), while Suetonius provides a more general picture of that emperor's generous sponsorship of literary activity:

primus e fisco Latinis Graecisque rhetoribus annua centena constituit;
praestantis poetas ... insigni congiario magnaue mercede donavit.

Suet. *Vesp.* 18

[Vespasian] was the first emperor to provide a salary of 100 000 *sestertii* for a chair of Latin rhetoric and one of Greek rhetoric, paid from the imperial treasury. He gave generous gifts and great rewards to eminent poets.

Vespasian and Titus, then, promoted literary pursuits as much as their successor would. But it is under Domitian that continuities with the Neronian period are most conspicuous. This is evident in the institution of prestigious *poetarum certamina* (poetic competitions) under Nero and Domitian. The earlier emperor established the Quinquennial Games, also known as "Neronia," in 60 CE:

instituit et quinquennale certamen primus omnium Romae more Graeco triplex, musicum gymnicum equestre, quod appellavit Neronia ... deinde in orchestram senatumque descendit et orationis quidem carminisque Latini coronam, de qua honestissimus quisque contenderat, ipsorum consensu concessam sibi recepit ...

Suet. *Nero* 12

He was also the first to establish at Rome a five-yearly competition, in the Greek manner, made up of three events, music, gymnastic, and equestrian, which he termed Neronia ... Then he went down into the orchestra, where the senators sit, and accepted the crown he was offered for oratory and verse in Latin.

tr. Edwards

These games were discontinued in the hostile climate that followed Nero's death in 68 (Censorinus *D.N.* 18.15). Two decades later Domitian not only revived Nero's practice, but even doubled down on his predecessor's efforts:

instituit et quinquennale certamen Capitolino Iovi triplex, musicum equestre gymnicum, et aliquanto plurimum quam nunc est coronatorum. certabant enim et prosa oratione Graece Latineque ... celebrabat et in Albano quotannis Quinquatria Minervae, cui collegium instituerat, ex quo sorte ducti magisterio fungerentur ederentque eximias venationes et scaenicos ludos, superque oratorum ac poetarum certamina.

Suet. *Dom.* 4

He also established, to be held every five years, a three-part competition, in honor of Capitoline Jupiter, involving music, riding, and gymnastics, and with rather more prizes than are currently awarded. For there were competitions also in prose declamation in both Greek and Latin ... Every year, too, in Albanum, he would celebrate the Quinquatria of Minerva, for which he had established a college of priests, from among whom men were chosen by lot to acts as officers, providing outstanding animal fights and theatrical shows as well as competitions for orators and poets.

tr. Edwards

The similarity of the initial sentences in the two Suetonius passages suggests a conceptual link between the two emperors, as creators and overseers of games and poetic festivals. According to Martial, Domitian's Capitoline Games generated attendance from all over the world (*Ep.* 9.40). The available data suggests that there was no shortage of contestants: in 94 there were 52 contestants for the Greek poetry prize alone (Jones and Milns 2002, 131; cf. the testimony of *ILS* 5177 concerning the victory that same year, in the category of Greek poetry, of a certain Q. Sulpicius Claudius Maximus at the startlingly young age of 11). In addition to the Capitoline festival to honor Jupiter, Domitian also venerated Minerva, the third deity of the Capitoline Triad, with the Alban games, held annually on March 19 (cf. Cass. Dio 67.1.2, where Domitian's festival is associated with the Athenian Panathenaia; see also Hardie 2003, 135–42 on the alternative name *Juvenalia* for the Alban games). Statius proudly refers to his success at the Alban games, where he won the prize of a gold wreath in the form of olive leaves (*Silv.* 3.5.28–9, 4.2.67). On the other hand, Statius failed to win the crown at the Capitoline Games, as he laments in a poem mourning the death of his father (and teacher, the grammarian Statius the Elder):

qualem te Dardanus Albae
 aspexisset ager, si per me certa tulisses
 Caesarea donata manu! quod subdere robur
 illa dies, quantum potuit dempsisse senectae!
 nam quod me mixta quercus non pressit oliva
 et fugit speratus honos, cum lustra parentis
 invida Tarpei canerem!

Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.227–33

How the Dardanian field of Alba would have looked on you if through me you had borne the garlands donated by Caesar's hand! What strength that day could have given you, how much old age it could have taken away! For as to the fact that the oak leaves with olive leaves mingled together did not cover me and the hoped-for honor deserted me, when I sang the invidious festival of the Tarpeian parent ...

tr. Gibson

The exact dates of Statius' victory at the Alban games and his defeat at the Capitoline festival are much disputed, but both unquestionably belong to Domitian's reign (see Gibson 2006, 261–2, with further bibliography, and cf. Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.31–3 *tu, cum Capitolia nostrae/infitiata lyrae, saevum ingratumque dolebas/mecum victa Iouem* (when the Capitol said nay to my lyre, it was you [i.e., Claudia, Statius' wife] that grieved for Jove's cruelty and ingratitude, sharing my discomfiture); perhaps in 90 for both contests or in 86–90 for the Alban games, and 90 for the Capitoline setback). The prominence Statius affords these *poetarum certamina* thus underscores Domitian's revival of Neronian practice, now also accompanied by the provision of new sites in Rome, where such competitions could take place – Domitian's Odeum and the Stadium for athletic contests (see Darwall-Smith 1996, 221–3). Such festivals, then, are firmly rooted in later Flavian culture; the institution of new games produces “the effect of building up an Italian games-circuit similar to the great round of Greek games” (Coleman 1986, 3098). Domitian's contests thus rival the Olympic and other Greek games, even the Panathenaic festival itself. Furthermore the *certamina* became part of the dynasty's propaganda machine, often helping to promote its various martial achievements; we can see in both Domitian's festivals “some reflection of the regime's requirement for supportive performances in the public and private domains” (Hardie 2003, 141). Certainly the competitions provided prominent venues in which poets seeking the crown of victory would fail or succeed according to the imperial nod.

2 Patronage: libraries, literature, the emperor and friends

In Tacitus' unflattering characterization, Domitian's early personal interest in literature was feigned, part of an attempt to conceal his rivalry with and hatred for his older brother (*Hist.* 4.86). Quintilian predictably casts things in a far more favorable light. In the tenth book of his *Institutio Oratoria* he exploits the well-known device of *recusatio* to offer passing praise of Domitian's poetic achievements while highlighting his military *res gestae* (achievements) instead (on Quintilian's statements as ironic, see Penwill 2000 and *contra* Roche 2009):

hos nominamus quia Germanicum Augustum ab institutis studiis deflexit cura terrarum, parumque dis visum est esse eum maximum poetarum. quid tamen his ipsis eius operibus in quae

donato imperio iuvenis secesserat sublimius, doctius, omnibus denique numeris praestantius? quis enim caneret bella melius quam qui sic gerit? quem praesidentes studiis deae propius audirent? cui magis suas artis aperiret familiare numen Minerva? dicent haec plenius futura saecula, nunc enim ceterarum fulgore virtutum laus ista praestringitur. nos tamen sacra litterarum colentis feres, Caesar, si non tacitum hoc praeterimus ...

Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.91–2

I name these [sc. writers as exemplary], because Germanicus Augustus [sc. Domitian] has been diverted from the literary pursuits he had begun by his responsibility for the world, and the gods did not think it enough that he should merely be the greatest of poets. But what can be more sublime, more skilled, more perfect in every respect than the works which he retired to write as a young man, after handing the supreme power to others? Who could sing of wars better than he who wages them so well? Whom would the goddesses who preside over literature listen to with closer attention? To whom would his patron deity, Minerva, more readily reveal her arts? Future ages will tell of this more fully; at present, this aspect of his glory is obscured by the brighter splendors of his other virtues. Yet, Caesar, you will forgive me, as a worshipper at the shrine of literature, if I refuse to pass this by ...

tr. Russell, with explanations added

As Fantham (1996, 173) observes, Quintilian owed his professorship of Latin oratory to Domitian's father and was honored by Domitian with the ornaments of a consul; the compliment to the emperor is also "an index of the heightened level of obsequiousness now required." If Domitian's early literary endeavors were a product of *otium* (leisure), his subsequent imperial responsibilities caused him to abandon his personal literary pursuits. In his *Lives*, Suetonius likewise reports that Domitian gave up personal literary pursuits upon becoming emperor, but balances this against a concern for broader literary culture, as evidenced in his attention to Rome's libraries:

liberalia studia imperii initio neglexit, quanquam bibliothecas incendio absumptas impensissime reparare curasset, exemplaribus undique petitis, missisque Alexandream qui describerent emendarentque.

Suet. *Dom.* 20

At the start of his reign he paid little attention to the liberal arts, although when some libraries were destroyed by fire, he took care to have them restored at enormous expense, procuring copies of texts from all over the place and sending people to Alexandria to make fresh copies and correct others.

tr. Edwards

Domitian's painstaking efforts to restore library collections are noteworthy: as Coleman (1986, 3096) observes, his care in securing authoritative replacement copies "suggests genuine academic concern rather than pure self-advertisement". Too (2010, 46) further notes that this episode "shows the emperor's regard for Alexandria as the paradigm for the imperial library over and against any number of texts that might exist in private book collections."

But which libraries does Domitian restore? Coleman surveys the various possibilities (1986, 3095–6): for instance, the *Porticus Octaviae* is a suitable candidate, burned down in the great fire of 80 CE, or the library of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, also destroyed in that the same year (even though there is no information about a library in

the temple). One could add Martial's reference to the library of the *Templum Augusti Novum* (the temple of Augustus on the slope of the Palatine hill, mentioned in 12.2(3).7–8), damaged by fire and rebuilt under Trajan in 101, but with repairs perhaps already begun under Domitian. Is it possible that the *Bibliotheca Ulpia*, named after the next imperial dynasty, had been built on the Augustan site of Asinius Pollio's library, the *Atrium Libertatis*, the site of extensive library restoration by Domitian?

Librarians continue to flourish in the Flavian period, as we can glean from Martial's *Epigram* 5.5, addressed to Sextus, the freedman curator of Domitian's Palatine library (and perhaps himself a poet, as he is styled *facundus* (eloquent) in the opening verse). Here Martial seeks to secure an appropriate spot for his poems. He is careful not to presume to stand beside Domitian's epic composition – a location better suited to the works of Virgil:

sit locus et nostris aliqua tibi parte libellis,
qua Pedo, qua Marsus quaque Catullus erit.
ad Capitolini caelestia carmina belli
grande cothurnati pone Maronis opus.
Mart. *Ep.* 5.5–8

Find a place somewhere for my little books, in the neighborhood of Pedo and Marsus and Catullus. Beside the celestial lay of the Capitoline War [an epic written by Domitian in his youth] place the great work of buskined Maro [sc. Virgil].

tr. Shackleton Bailey

The library clearly functioned as an important locus for authorial glorification – whence the importance of figures like Sextus. No less importantly, inclusion of one's works in an imperial library meant legitimization inasmuch as it conveyed the emperor's approval.

In addition to such public collections, of course, there were smaller private libraries, outside the purview of the emperor, from which we can glean insights concerning patronage under other prominent individuals. In *Ep.* 7.17, for instance, Martial affords a glimpse into practices and actual use of a private library:

Ruris bibliotheca delicati,
vicinam videt unde lector urbem ...
hos nido licet inseras vel imo
septem quos tibi misimus libellos
auctoris calamo sui notatos:
haec illis pretius facit litura.
Mart. *Ep.* 7.17.1–2, 5–8

Library of a dainty villa from which the reader sees the neighboring city ... you may put in a niche, even the lowest, these seven little books that I have sent you, marked by their author's pen; the corrections give them value.

tr. Shackleton Bailey

Here Julius Martialis, the wealthy owner of the villa, contributes to the longed-for immortality of Martial's work, by its inclusion in his library. As Fitzgerald (2007, 150) observes, "patron and client can also mutually enhance each other's status. ... [T]he library has its

part to play in the history of the book, for this copy is corrected by the author's own hand, and available to other readers in Martial's library. It is an authorized edition from which copies can be made and against which other copies can be checked. Book and library, then, mutually protect each other's survival."

Beyond doubt, then, patronage was crucial for Flavian poets and, as Newlands (2011, 17) observes, "provided an anchor amidst the uncertainties of book publication." That there were many such relationships involving an assortment of literary patrons arises from the lack of a single literary circle under the Flavians, and the absence of the dominating presence of a figure like Maecenas or Messala (White 1975, 300; on the multiplicity of patrons in the *Silvae*, see Newlands 2011, 18–9; on patronage in Martial, see Holzberg 1988, 65–73; Sullivan 1991, 155–9; Puelma 1995, and Gold 2003). It should of course be borne in mind that our modern term "patronage" is anachronistic (White 1978), since in the period under discussion, the relationship between authors and their "patrons" was conceived and articulated in terms of reciprocity and *amicitia* (friendship) (on the possibility of monetary commissions, see Nauta 2002, 244–8). In his detailed study on the topic, Saller (1982, 1) defines patronage as follows: "First, it involves the *reciprocal* exchange of goods and services. Secondly, to distinguish it from a commercial transaction in the marketplace, the relationship must be a personal one of some duration. Thirdly, it must be asymmetrical, in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status and offer different kinds of goods and services in the exchange – a quality which sets patronage off from friendship between equals." The benefits of this "friendship" with the emperor or a prominent member of the elite were many. In this often complicated *do-ut-des* relationship, the author dedicated his work to the patron by addressing him in a prose preface, as Statius and, to a lesser degree, Martial, does (cf. *Silv.* 2 *pr.* and 3 *pr.*; *Mart.* 8 *pr.*; see Johannsen 2006), and thereby secured the promotion of the book and its dissemination. We should bear in mind that the patron often also provided "the physical as well as the artistic conditions for poetic composition" (Newlands 2011, 17).

Literary representations of relationships of *amicitia* between authors and their wealthy patrons do not, of course, offer unmediated access to historical reality; they do, nonetheless, provide us with much valuable data. Based on information culled from Statius' *Silvae* and Martial's *Epigrams*, Fantham (1996, 179) concludes that "Statius was in competition with Martial. He came on the scene after the epigrammatist, but his expansive descriptions of their way of life give the impression that he was perhaps more fully accepted into the patrons' private world" (this theory of enmity goes back Heuvel 1936–7, while *contra* see Newlands 2011, 22–3 for a "creative, stimulating exchange" instead). Despite the many prominent friends featured in the poetry of Martial and Statius' occasional poems, such as Atedius Melior (*Silv.* 2.1; *Ep.* 6.28), Claudius Etruscus (*Silv.* 1.5; *Ep.* 6.42), and Novius Vindex (*Silv.* 4.6; *Ep.* 9.43–4), Martial never achieves financial independence; his imperial eulogies also seem to have failed to achieve this goal. In *Epigrams* 11.3 and 5.16, for instance, Martial complains that he gains little money, his wide popularity notwithstanding. But even Statius would be fashioned by Juvenal as a pimp who "sells" a script to the pantomime Paris in order to survive:

curritur ad vocem iucundam et carmen amicae
Thebaidos, laetam cum fecit Statius urbem
promisitque diem: tanta dulcedine captos

adficit ille animos tantaque libidine volgi
 auditur. sed cum fregit subsellia versu
 esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.
 Juv. *Sat.* 7.82–7

When Statius has made Rome happy by fixing a day, everyone rushes to hear his gorgeous voice and the poetry of his darling *Thebaid*. Their hearts are captivated by the sheer lusciousness he inspires and the crowd listens in sheer ecstasy. But when he has broken the benches with his poetry, he will go hungry unless he sells his virgin *Agave* to Paris.

tr. Braund

The satirist mentions this by way of contrasting the situation under Domitian with changing conditions and attitudes under Hadrian (Nauta 2002, 3).

3 Books: *recitationes*, transmission, and distribution

Juvenal's sardonic reference to Statius invites a consideration of the logistics of presenting one's work to the public and subsequently publishing it. According to the satirist, Statius draws large crowds to the recitation of his *Thebaid*, while at the same time selling a script entitled *Agave* out of pecuniary distress. The institution of public or semi-public *recitationes* dates back to Asinius Pollio in the Augustan age (Sen. *Contron.* 4 *pr.* 2), and by the Flavian period it had become an indispensable medium for the dissemination of texts (see Markus 2000 and, for Statius in particular, Newlands 2011, 19–20). Worth noting here is the dramatic setting of Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus* in 75 CE, the day after Curiatius Maternus' recitation of his tragedy *Cato*. Statius proudly mentions a recitation for a group of senators (or perhaps a broader group that included a number of senators) at which his own father was present:

qualis eras Latios quotiens ego carmine patres
 mulcerem felixque tui spectator adesses
 muneris!

Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.215–17

How you seemed, whenever I soothed the Latin fathers in song and you were present, a happy spectator of your own gift!

tr. Gibson

That Pliny the Younger took pains to present his work as effectively as possible is evident from *Epist.* 9.34, in which he asks his friend Suetonius for an honest opinion on whether he should read the verses himself or have a *libertus* (freedman) do it on his behalf. From another letter (*Epist.* 8.21), we learn that one recitation lasted two days – at the request of Pliny's audience (cf. also 5.3.11). Of course such practices find detractors as well, or so we can glean from Tacitus' dismissive remark at *Dial.* 9.4 that recitations produce *clamorem vagum et voces inanes et gaudium volucre* (a rambling shout, empty voices, and fleeting joy). Recitations become a means of communication between the author and the audience, with the publication of the book constituting the last part of the process, “the icon of chic communication” (Barchiesi 2005, 321–4) between the author and his audience/readers/patron (for the emphasis on the performance rather than publication,

see White 1974, 40 and *contra* Fowler 1995, 204–21, as well as Hutchinson 1993, 146–8). In a word, the production of poetry goes through three phases: initial recitation, preliminary private copies for individual patrons, and the subsequent multiplication of poems grouped in books for the broader reading public (Fantham 1996, 16).

The Flavian Age witnessed a veritable revolution regarding textual format: the emergence of the codex as against the papyrus roll. As Fantham (1996, 16) observes “this generation may have seen a short-lived climax in the book trade, in that Martial’s first book of epigrams and his *Apophoreta* ... both advertise the new format of the codex – our modern book with pages – sold by the bookseller Secundus, as well as the regular format in scrolls available at the shop of Atrectus in the Argiletum” (see also Nauta 2002, 120–31 with further bibliography). Martial proclaims the new format early in the first book of his *Epigrams*:

Qui tecum cupis esse meos ubicumque libellos
et comites longae quaeris habere viae,
hos eme, quos artat breuibis membrana tabellis:
scrinia da magnis, me manus una capit.
ne tamen ignores ubi sim venalis et erres
urbe vagus tota, me duce certus eris:
libertum docti Lucensis quaere Secundum
limina post Pacis Palladiumque forum.

Mart. *Ep.* 1.2

You who want my little books to keep you company wherever you may be and desire their companionship on a long journey, buy these that parchment compresses in small pages. Give book boxes to the great, one hand grasps *me*. But in case you do not know where I am on sale and stray wandering all over town, you will be sure of your way under my guidance. Look for Secundus, freedman of lettered Lucensis, behind Peace’s entrance and Pallas’ Forum.

tr. Shackleton Bailey

Here Martial provides the earliest surviving reference to the publication of works of literature in parchment codices (additional references in Martial’s fourteenth book of *Epigrams*, called *Apophoreta*: 14.184, 188, 190, and 192). No doubt his publisher Secundus, as Howell (1980, 105) observes, “wished to profit from the widespread popularity of Martial’s works by producing an edition in this easily carried and compact form – as it were, in paperback” (cf. also Leary 1996, 249–57). Later in the first book the poet provides directions for would-be customers:

illinc me pete. †nec† roges Atrectum –
hoc nomen dominus gerit tabernae –
de primo dabit alterove nido
rasum pumice purpuraque cultum
denaris tibi quinque Martialem.

Mart. *Ep.* 1.117.13–7

Look for me there. Ask for Atrectus (that being the name of the shop’s proprietor), and he will hand you from the first or second pigeonhole a Martial, shaved with pumice and smart with purple, for five denarii.

tr. Shackleton Bailey

As Fitzgerald (2007, 139) notes, “texts circulated among the elite for the most part through private contacts and ties of *amicitia*. Copies were made by private (slave) copyists for individuals, and publication, which was preceded by sending the work to friends for corrections and suggestions, consisted simply in the understanding that the text had now reached a definitive state and copies could be made without the permission of the author.” In Martial’s case, Howell (1980, 107) concludes that the poet had probably sold his manuscript to Secundus and Atrectus, who published it in both codex and *volumen* editions, and “it is to oblige them that he puts in these two poems, and puts them, moreover, in striking positions.”

Two of Martial’s *Apophoreta*, 14.186 and 190, attest to the practice of giving books as party favors. “[Poetry’s] relative brevity made it suitable for copying and resale to the public, and even the fullest texts were reduced to a form that could be given as presents: Martial includes among his dinner party favors for departing guests texts of Homer, Virgil, Lucan, Ovid, and others with no indication that these little books were abridged or excerpted” (Fantham 1996, 16). And it is Martial himself who predicates his ultimate success and title as a poet upon sales: *sunt quidam qui me dicant non esse poetam: | sed qui me vendit bybliopola putat* (“There are some who say I am not a poet; but the bookseller who sells me thinks I am,” 14.194).

The booksellers mentioned by Martial are located behind the Temple of Peace and the Forum of Pallas (Forum Transitorium) in the Argiletum. Fitzgerald (2007, 141) points out that the poet’s references to booksellers “have more to do with circulation than with profits, for a Roman author earned no royalties and made little from the sale of his book to a bookseller”. Apparently the booksellers were able to make money from these publications (on the cost of books, see Nauta 2002, 134), as well as from the circulation of books of great authors of the past. Pliny the Younger, for instance, reports that Silius Italicus indulged in accumulating books and Virgil memorabilia (*Epist.* 3.7.8); as Fantham (1996, 15 n. 32) observes, “such demand would create supply.” And Tacitus’ reference to the circulation of the books of great authors of the past (*Dial.* 21.2) suggests a brisk antiquarian market (Fantham 1996, 15).

As to the purchasers and readers of the works of Flavian poets and prose authors, Martial once again provides insights. The poet expects a broad readership for his books – “everyone,” as he claims hyperbolically at 7.97.13 (*omnibus legeris*), and not only in Rome, but all over the world (*tota ... Roma*, 5.16.3; *toto ... orbe*, 5.13.3; see also Nauta 2002, 131–41). Among his projected readers, Martial includes women:

Huc est usque tibi scriptus, matrona, libellus.
cui sint scripta rogas interiora? mihi.
gymnasium, thermas, stadium est hac parte: recede.
exuimur: nudos parce videre viros.
...
si bene te novi, longum iam lassa libellum
ponebas, totum nunc studiosa leges.

(Mart. *Ep.* 3.68.1–4, 11–12)

Thus far, matron, my little book has been written for you. For whom are the latter parts written, you ask? For me. The gymnasium, the warm baths, the running track are in this portion. Retire; we are undressing. Forbear to look upon naked males ... If I know you well,

you were already weary of the lengthy volume and putting it aside; but now you will read with interest to the end.

Even if this epigram tells us very little “about how a female readership actually read Martial,” it nevertheless presents us with Martial’s view on how “different categories of readers consume the text in different ways” (Fitzgerald 2007, 146). To be sure, publication transmitted the opus to a “public” beyond the “private” sphere of the patron, but precise quantification and categorization of the readership is impossible.

4 Problems of authorship

The road to publication was not without obstacles, as we have seen in the previous sections, but the process helped to safeguard the author’s control over his work, which was frequently at risk in a pre-copyright world. In the *prooemium* (foreword) to the first book of the *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian mentions a vexing past experience with unauthorized publication:

quos ab ipsis dicendi velut incunabulis per omnes quae modo aliquid oratori futuro conferant artis ad summam eius operis perducere festinabimus, atque eo magis quod duo iam sub nomine meo libri ferebantur artis rhetoricae neque editi a me neque in hoc comparati. namque alterum sermonem per biduum habitum pueri quibus id praestabatur exceperant, alterum pluribus sane diebus, quantum notando consequi potuerant, interceptum boni iuvenes sed nimium amantes mei temerario editionis honore vulgaverant.

Quint. *Inst.* 1. *pr.* 6–7

To carry the work through from the very cradle of eloquence, as it were, through all the skills that may be of some service to the future orator, right to the conclusion of the whole matter, shall be my urgent task – all the more urgent because two books of the *Art of Rhetoric* are already circulating in my name, though they were never published by me nor prepared for this purpose. One is a two days’ lecture course, which was taken down by the slaves to whom the responsibility was given. The other lecture course, which spread over several days, was taken down by shorthand (as best they could) by some excellent young men who were nevertheless too fond of me, and therefore rashly honored it with publication and wide circulation.

tr. Russell

Quintilian alludes to the publication of his speeches without his consent elsewhere too (*Inst.* 3.6.68). Circulation of someone’s work under the name of a famous author was another frequent problem. But the most common act of authorial infringement in the Roman imperial period would appear to have been plagiarism.

The opening letter in Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, an epistle addressed to the bookseller Trypho (also known from Mart. *Ep.* 4.72 and 13.3), mentions the latter’s eagerness to move the opus to production:

Efflagitasti cotidiano convicio ut libros quos ad Marcellum meum de institutione oratoria scrips-eram iam emittere inciperem. Nam ipse eos nondum opinabar satis maturuisse ... Sed si tantopere efflagitantur quam tu adfirmas, permittimus vela ventis et oram solventibus bene precemur.

Quint. *Inst.* 1. *ep.* 1

You have been pressing me every day, with great insistence, to start publishing the books on “the orator’s education” which I had written for my friend Marcellus. My own view was that they had not yet matured enough ... But if they are called for as urgently as you allege, let us spread our sails before the wind and pray for a good voyage as we cast off.

tr. Russell

Trypho’s insistence on prompt publication of the books of the *Institutio* may well have been motivated to fear of plagiarism. Speaking of Martial’s corpus, Rimell (2010, 27) notes that “plagiarism is a frequent talking point and threat in the *Epigrams*, emphasizing the poems’ looseness and penetrability (both literary and sexual) ... plagiarists are expert in cutting and pasting stolen epigrams ...” Many epigrams address this aspect (for example, 1.66 and 1.29, 28, 53, 72; see Rimell 2010, 40–50). Consider, for instance, Paulus’ case:

Carmina Paulus emit, recitat sua carmina Paulus.
nam quod emas possis iure vocare tuum.

Mart. *Ep.* 2.20

Paulus buys poems, Paulus recites his poems. For what you buy, you may rightly call your own.

tr. Shackleton Bailey

Here Martial playfully suggests that purchasing a book could authorize the buyer to claim intellectual ownership over the materials comprised in it as well. As Rimell (2010, 28) observes, “all readers are encouraged to make these books their own, deciding on their own cropped version or edited highlights.” In the fascinating world of Martial’s *Epigrams* then, “[the] collection ... is insecure, vital, ever-changing: its shape and identity, like that of its author, can quickly melt, reform and evanesce” (Rimell 2010, 28).

Such playful notions of authorial transference found a more concrete – and exorbitant – expression in the experience of another Flavian author, Pliny the Elder. His nephew, Pliny the Younger, reports that a certain Larcus Licinus had offered to buy the preliminary notes to his uncle’s magnum opus, the *Naturalis Historia*, for a hefty sum:

Hac intentione tot ista volumina peregit electorumque commentarios centum sexaginta mihi reliquit, opisthographos quidem et minutissimis scriptos; qua ratione multiplicatur hic numerus. Referebat ipse potuisse se, cum procuraret in Hispania, vendere hos commentarios Larcio Licino quadringentis milibus nummum; et tunc aliquanto pauciores erant.

Plin. *Epist.* 3.5.17

It was this application which enabled him to finish all those volumes, and to leave me 160 notebooks of selected passages, written in a minute hand on both sides of the page, so that their number is really doubled. He used to say that when he was serving as procurator in Spain he could have sold these notebooks to Larcus Licinus for 400 000 *sestertii*, and there were far fewer of them then.

The amount of money offered is immense, the minimum property qualification for an *eques* (knight). As Murphy (2003, 305) notes “For Licinus to propose such a

transaction was in itself peculiar. There is no other case known in the ancient world of a wealthy man offering to buy an author's rough notes for any price." But the "lack of etiquette" (Murphy 2003, 305) on Licinus' part notwithstanding, the episode calls for a deeper probing into the reasons for such an exchange. Undeniably the project undertaken by Pliny the Elder is one of extreme interest for the Roman elite of the period. Paradoxography, geography, ethnology, zoology, and all the disciplines covered by the expanse of the *Naturalis Historia* were "hot" topics, and Licinus evidently wanted to be in the forefront of contemporary research and literary trends. Where he errs is in the tactless breach of the protocol, namely "the exchange of text and of story to mark the social circulation of favor and power" (Murphy 2003, 306).

A final, complex case of authorial infringement is mentioned by Martial in an epigram accusing a contemporary (and inferior) poet of inserting a page of his own poetry into one of Martial's books:

Vna est in nostris tua, Fidentine, libellis
 pagina, sed certa domini signata figura,
 quae tua traducit manifesto carmina furto
 ...
 indice non opus est nostris nec iudice libris,
 stat contra dicitque tibi tua pagina "Fur es".
 (Mart. Ep. 1.53.1–3, 11–12)

Fidentinus, there is one page of yours in *my* little book, only one, but stamped with the sure likeness of its owner; and it holds your poems up to scorn as a manifest theft ... My books need no informer, no judge: your page confronts you and says You are a thief."

tr. Shackleton Bailey

Martial lambastes Fidentinus for stealing his poems and inserting one page of his own, which is naturally much inferior. Fidentinus breaks *fides* (faith) and becomes a *fur*, a plagiarist. He is caught red-handed, since the inferior quality of the insert betrays the act and its perpetrator. Of course, as Rimell observes, the poems on plagiarism "do not simply describe or reflect a real or imagined scenario in which Martial's unpublished or recently published poems were vulnerable to manipulation and theft: rather, the book as a whole is invested in performing, mimicking and hyperbolizing the plagiarist's guile and the unnerving impact of his (part-) stolen creations" (2010, 50).

5 Center and periphery

There are many Flavian authors whose works do not survive; the testimonia preserved in the extant literature of this and later periods attest to a plethora of poets, orators, and historians flourishing under the Flavians (see CHAPTER 26, LOST LITERATURE). It is during the Flavian period that we see the full emergence of literary production as an approved upper-class activity. Members of the senatorial and equestrian orders increasingly devoted their time to writing, and in a range of literary genres. In fact by the time of Vespasian,

“a class has begun to emerge of senatorial technocrats writing technical texts” (Fantham 1996, 184), such as Sextus Julius Frontinus, who writes on land surveying, aqueducts (*De aquae ductu Urbis Romae*), and military tactics (*Strategemata*) or the jurist Neratius Priscus.

The most prominent writers tended to live in Rome and often held posts inside the imperial system, or enjoyed the *amicitia* of prominent senators and aristocrats, who in turn enjoyed close relationships with the ruling Flavian House. A noteworthy feature of Flavian literary culture is a pattern of migration from the periphery of the empire to its center. Quintilian, for instance, came from Calagurris in Spain; Martial hailed from Bilbilis, also in Spain; Canius Rufus from Cadiz; Fabius Rusticus from Spain; Suetonius’ family may have traced its origins from Hippo Regius in Africa. Spanish migration was not new: a generation or so before these authors, the Annaei (both Senecas and Lucan) had come to Rome from Cordoba in the Baetica. The Roman cosmopolis remained the center of cultural life, and of literary activity in particular.

But of course literature could and did flourish elsewhere. In Italy the Greco-Roman city of Neapolis (modern Naples) merits attention, not least for the renown of its native son Statius. *Silvae* 5.3, which laments the death of the poet’s father, the *grammaticus* Statius the Elder, sheds light on the biculturalism of Neapolis. Fantham (1996, 175) notes that “both father and son were eager to confirm their Hellenic culture, and Statius’ highest compliment for his father is to hope that in Elysium he will talk with Homer and Hesiod.” Statius provides invaluable information with regard to his Greek upbringing in the Campanian city, including the demanding curriculum set by his father: Homer and Hesiod feature prominently, as expected, but in addition the lyric poets, and in particular Pindar, Ibycus, Alcman, Stesichorus, Sappho, Callimachus, Lycophron, and the “mysteries of delicate Corinna” (*Silv.* 5.3.160). Students were drawn to the Elder Statius’ school from southern and central Italy and eventually from the Roman senatorial class itself (Fantham 1996, 175). Statius boasts of his father’s achievements in successfully educating future governors, generals and public servants:

iura dat Eois, alter compescit Hiberos,
alter Achaemenium secludit Zeugmate Persen;
hi dices Asiae populos, hi Pontica frenant,
hi fora pacificis emendant fascibus, illi
castra pia statione tenent; tu laudis origo.

Stat. *Silv.* 5.3.186–90

And now perhaps one from that flock is giving laws to the peoples of the Dawn, another holds in check the Iberians, and another keeps away the Achaemenid Persian at Zeugma. Some are controlling the wealthy peoples of Asia, some the Pontic regions, some correct the courts with rods that bring peace, others maintain the camps with loyal watchfulness; you are the source of their glory.

tr. Gibson

Through his instruction, Statius’ father is said to prepare the next ruling class of Rome. The poet here emphasizes a synergy between Greek and Latin.

If Statius was a Greek poet writing in Latin, it should not be forgotten that Roman authors sometimes composed in Greek. Suetonius, for instance, wrote several treatises related to Greek culture in Greek (*On Terms of Abuse*, *On Greek Games*, *On Physical*

Defects). Were these perhaps intended for other Greek-speaking scholars? (Fantham 1996, 189). At the same time he composed treatises related to Roman culture in Latin (*On the Roman Year, On Rome and Its Customs and Manners, On the Institution of Offices, On Roman Spectacles and Games*; see Wallace-Hadrill 1983, 44–8).

Finally, a major author from the periphery of the empire emerges under Flavians patronage, the Jewish writer Flavius Josephus. As Josephus relates in his autobiography, ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτοκράτωρ Τίτος ... χαράξας τῇ ἑαυτοῦ χειρὶ τὰ βιβλία δημοσιῶσαι προσέταξεν, (Titus personally put his own stamp on my volumes and bade me publish them,” *Vit.* 363). Josephus’ enigmatic personality, as it emerges from his writings, prompts Beard (2003, 545) to question the established *communis opinio* (common opinion) that Josephus was a “self-serving traitor, eager to cast himself and his new patrons (notably Titus) in an undeservedly favorable light.” Josephus rather puts a particular spin on the events he narrates, and “his account and understanding of the triumph owes a good deal to the interpretation that his Flavian patron themselves wishes to put on the event” (Beard 2003, 556; cf. also Mason 2009).

At the beginning of the *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus states that, his text was first written in his native tongue (Aramaic) and then translated into Greek (*BJ* 1. pr. 3), sometimes by using assistants to help him with the Greek language (*Ap.* 1.50; cf. also *AJ* 20.263 and see Beard 2003, 546). This intriguing declaration points to additional complexities associated with writing and publication for an author from the periphery whose native language was neither Greek nor Latin. It is certainly the case that one language or the other was obligatory for any author who wished to be read *in orbe terrarum* (universally).

Josephus’ connections in Rome (probably through King Agrippa II) provided him with a liaison in the figure of Epaphroditus, who became an important patron. Epaphroditus was evidently non-Jewish (see Mason 2003, 563–4 and esp. n. 24 on possible identification for this otherwise elusive figure). Josephus’ confession reveals the existence of a “group of Greek-speaking non-Jews in Rome with an interest in an overview of Judean history and culture” (Mason 2003, 564):

ἦσαν δὲ τινες, οἱ πόθῳ τῆς ἱστορίας ἐπ’ αὐτὴν με προὔτρεπον, καὶ μάλιστα
δὴ πάντων Ἐπαφρόδιτος ἀνὴρ ἅπασαν μὲν ἰδέαν παιδείας ἡγαπηκώς,
διαφερόντως δὲ χαίρων ἐμπειρίαις πραγμάτων, ἅτε δὴ μεγάλοις μὲν αὐτὸς
ὁμιλήσας πράγμασι καὶ τύχαις πολυτρόποις, ἐν ἅσιν δὲ θαυμαστὴν
φύσεως ἐπιδειξάμενος ἰσχὺν καὶ προαίρεσιν ἀρετῆς ἀμετακίνητον.

Joseph. *AJ* 1.8

However, there were certain persons curious about the history who urged me to pursue it, and above all Epaphroditus, a man devoted to every form of learning, but specially interested in the experiences of history, conversant as he himself has been with large affairs and varying turns of fortune, through all which he has displayed a wonderful force of character and an attachment to virtue that nothing could deflect.

tr. Thackeray

Josephus’ testimony thus offers a fleeting glimpse of non-Roman patronage under the Flavians, and as such hints at the complex range of influences driving literary production in this period.

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FURTHER READING

Hardie (1983) provides a good start on issues of patronage in Statius' *Silvae*. Nauta (2002) offers rich and insightful analysis of both Statius and Martial with regard to imperial and non-imperial patronage. Saller (2000) considers patronage in its historical and socio-political context in the Flavian and Trajanic periods. Both Ahl (1984a) and Ahl (1984b) remain essential reading on the role of criticism in the literature of the early Empire and the emperor's reaction to it.

PART V

Literature

CHAPTER 22

Epic Poetry: Historicizing the Flavian Epics

Neil W. Bernstein

Introduction

These are felicitous times for reading Flavian epic. Several factors served to inhibit earlier readers' interest in these poems: their pessimistic worldview (especially the *Thebaid*), the difficulty and artificiality of their style (especially the *Argonautica*), their unceasing dialogue with a lengthy poetic tradition, and the uneven history of their European reception (especially the *Punica*). Works which scholars only a generation ago could describe as decadent and mannerist (Vessey 1982; Williams 1978) now invite attentive and sophisticated readings from a growing group of professional Latinists. The rapidly expanding corpus of new critical editions, philological commentaries, translations, monographic studies, and essay collections indicate the widespread revival of interest in these fascinating texts. There still remains a vast amount of work to do, both scholarly and pedagogical, before Flavian epic will be as well understood as Augustan epic, but attempts are no longer made to exclude it from the canon. As the premier poet of the Flavian era, Statius has been the greatest beneficiary of the renewal of interest, attested not least by the recent appearance of English translations of all of his works aimed at general audiences. The critical recuperation of Valerius Flaccus is also well underway; that of Silius Italicus is proceeding more slowly.

Evolution in the understanding of the Augustan epics has helped generate new perspectives on their successors in the genre. Reading Virgil's *Aeneid* as a multivocal work in which pessimistic "further voices" could be heard (Lyne 1987; Hardie 1993) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a work that called into question authoritative discourses (Hardie 1997; Tissol 1997; Williams 2009) increased sensitivity to the pessimism and anti-authoritarianism of Flavian epic. Recognizing the centrality of allusion in Augustan poetry helped change the evaluation of this compositional dynamic in Flavian poetry, as innovative and empowered by tradition rather than as epigonal and derivative. What one

scholar has noted with regard to Valerius' *Argonautica* applies equally well to all of the Flavian epics: "Dense, multi-level allusivity is a defining and constitutive feature ... In contemplating virtually any passage, the reader's awareness of the reception and reworking of a wide spectrum of earlier literature is a crucial determinant of the aesthetic effect" (Zissos 2008, xxxvii). The dialogue with Virgil's *Aeneid* has been the dominant focus of intertextual investigation. But allusion to much earlier literature, as well as allusion between the Flavian epics themselves (Stover 2009; Lovatt 2010), is important as well and remains relatively understudied.

This chapter examines the Flavian epics' commentary on recent historical developments, especially the civil war of 68–69 CE and Vespasian's rise to power (section 1). Such commentary does not typically limit itself to discrete references to specific events and individuals (*contra*, e.g., Benker 1987 and Taylor 1994). The narratives also reflect upon the central socio-political issues of their day, in part through their representation of the relationships that structure individual identities. These include the relationships between subjects and their monarchs (section 2), worshipers and their gods (section 3), and inhabitants and their native lands (section 4). A discussion of the epics' varied means of representing historical causation concludes the chapter (section 5). Many earlier critics dismissed the Flavian epics as escapist or nostalgic because their subject matter seemed to be deliberately distanced from their contemporary world. I read these narratives set in mythological Greece and the Roman middle Republic as engaged witnesses to recent history, ones that offer essentially pessimistic verdicts, in spite of their apparently optimistic panegyrics of the reigning emperor. The Flavian epics offer the melancholy suggestion that contemporary events are merely the latest instantiations of destructive paradigms as old as history itself.

1 Civil war

As one of Nero's last consuls, Silius Italicus was personally involved in the negotiations that ended the war of 68–69 CE (Tac. *Hist.* 3.65.2). His decision to write history, even in the form of epic, was, to be sure, an occupation befitting a retired consul (Gibson 2010). If the *Punica* was once dismissed as a nostalgic effort to ignore the contemporary world, its response to the recent civil war is now more accurately recognized (Marks 2005, 245–88). Even as the Romans resist the Carthaginian invaders at Cannae, the narrative prefigures the future civil wars both symbolically and metonymically. The names of Roman commanders (for example, Sulla, Curio, Brutus) evoke the civil wars of the first centuries BCE and CE (McGuire 1995, 113), while Solimus' inadvertent murder of his father before the battle symbolically evokes the intrafamilial violence associated in Roman epic with civil war (Fucecchi 1999; cf., e.g., Tac. *Hist.* 3.25).

Roman authors often used the war at Thebes as a mythological comparandum for their own civil wars (Braund 2006) and later observers explicitly compared the war of 68–69 CE to the war at Thebes (Philostratus *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 5.11; Dominik 1994, 137–53). Statius' narrative enjoins the reader to interpret the *Thebaid* in terms of the contemporary Roman world. An interjection by the narrator contrasts the poverty of Thebes with the comfortable world familiar to wealthy Romans:

haec inter fratres pietas erat, haec mora pugnae
 sola nec in regem perduratura secundum.
 et nondum crasso laquearia fulva metallo,
 montibus aut alte Graia effulta nitebant
 atria, congestos satis explicitura clientes;
 non impacatis regum advigilantia somnis
 pila, nec alterna †ferri statione gementes†
 excubiae, nec cura mero committere gemmas
 atque aurum violare cibus: sed nuda potestas
 armavit fratres, pugna est de paupere regno ...

... quo tenditis iras,
 a, miseri? quid si peteretur crimine tanto
 limes uterque poli ...

Stat. *Theb.* 1.142–51, 155–7

[The agreement to alternate rule] was the sole *pietas* between the brothers, this was the sole delay of fighting, though it would not endure to a second king. And not yet were paneled ceilings tawny with thick metal, nor did *atria* shine loftily, supported by [marble from] Greek mountains, open wide enough for clients packed in tight. Nor did javelins guard the peaceless sleep of the kings, nor were night watchmen †lamenting their alternating posts†, nor was it a concern to place gemstones in unmixed wine or to pollute gold with food. Rather naked power armed the brothers, and the fighting was over a poor kingdom ... Alas! Whither do you direct your rage, wretched men? What if by such crime both boundaries of heaven were being attacked...?

Statius' emphasis on Thebes' poverty pointedly overturns the longstanding Roman diagnosis of wealth as the cause of civil war, from Sallust's claim that greed (*avaritia*) was the cause of Sulla's crimes (*Bell. Cat.* 11) to the Augustan declaimer Porcius Latro's epigram "we had quieter times as paupers; we fought civil wars once the Capitol was gilded" (*quietiora tempora pauperes habuimus; bella civilia aurato Capitolio gessimus*, Sen. *Controv.* 2.1.1). The allusions to Lucan's *Bellum Civile* that encircle Statius' explanatory passage provide complementary indications to read the Theban war within the epic tradition of Roman civil war. Reference to the quickly violated pact to alternate rule as "the sole delay of fighting" (*mora pugnae/sola*, *Theb.* 1.142–3) recall the identification by Lucan's narrator of "Crassus in the middle" of Caesar and Pompey as "the sole delay of future war" (*nam sola futuri/Crassus erat belli medius mora*, *Bell. Civ.* 1.99–100). The narrator's concluding question, "whither do you direct your rage?" (*quo tenditis iras*, *Theb.* 1.155) recalls the question posed by *Patria* to Caesar as he crosses the Rubicon to begin the civil war: "Whither do you head past here?" (*quo tenditis ultra?*, *Bell. Civ.* 1.190). Immediately following this passage, an unnamed Theban abuses Eteocles for his unjust attempt to retain his throne in spite of the agreement to alternate the reign year by year. His complaint speaks directly to the experience of the generation who watched helplessly as one usurper gave way to another in 68–69 CE: "Will I always be given in turn as a slave to exiles? ... We are a worthless band, ready for any situation, prepared to serve whatever master" (*semperne vicissim/exulibus servire dabor?... nos vilis in omnes/prompata manus casus, domino cuicumque parati*, *Theb.* 1.177–8, 191–2).

The poet of an *Argonautica* demonstrates his creative independence with respect to a tradition that stretches back before Homer in part through his choice of episodes to include within a narrative that has no “canonical” list. (The modern reader tends to interpret Valerius’ choice of episodes primarily through comparison to the Greek *Argonautica* by the third-century BCE poet Apollonius Rhodius, though the contemporary Roman reader would have made comparison to a much larger list of surviving Argonautic narratives in both Greek and Latin; Hershkowitz 1998b, 35–67). One of Valerius’ most surprising innovations within the poetic tradition, at least as far as we are able to judge, is his inclusion of a civil war episode, the battle at Colchis between the brothers Aeetes and Perses that occupies the majority of the epic’s sixth book. Within a larger narrative context that contemporary readers would have readily associated with the turmoil of 68–69 CE, Valerius explicitly compares a moment of the conflict to a war between Romans:

Romanas veluti saevissima cum legiones
 Tisiphone regesque movet, quorum agmina pilis,
 quorum aquilis utrimque micant eademque parentes
 rura colunt, idem lectos ex omnibus agris
 miserat infelix non haec ad proelia Thybris:
 sic modo concordēs externaque fata petentes
 Palladii rapuere metus, sic in sua versi
 funera concurrunt dominis revocantibus axes.

Val. Fl. 6.402–9

It was just as when most savage Tisiphone moves kings and Roman legions whose battle-lines flash with spears and eagles on both sides, whose parents tend the same countryside. The same unfortunate river Tiber had sent from all the fields men chosen not for battles like these. Just so even now terror inspired by Pallas seized men united in seeking the deaths of foreigners; just so chariots rush together, turned toward their own destruction even as their masters call them back.

Romanizing markers such as these also encourage reading the epic’s narrative of violent conflicts between rulers and subjects in terms of Roman dynastic politics, the topic of section 2 of this chapter.

2 Subjects and leaders

Violent, insecure, and dissembling monarchs are the most frequently occurring type of leader in the Flavian epics. Virgil’s Mezentius, Lucan’s Caesar, and the tyrants of Senecan tragedy provide models for the characterizations of the leaders themselves and the nature of their relationships with their persecuted subjects. The benevolent monarchs of these epics tend to be weak and indecisive congeners of Virgil’s Latinus and Lucan’s Pompey. Only a few leaders, such as Statius’ Theseus and Silius’ Scipio, combine both virtue and power, and even in these cases significant flaws obstruct attempts to see these figures as models of the *optimus princeps*. No leader in Flavian epic is endowed with both the virtues of Virgil’s Aeneas and a correspondingly central role in his narrative. An earlier

tradition of scholarship attempted to read many of these accounts of tyrannical persecution as veiled criticism of Domitian. A more productive line of approach has been to interpret the epics' representation of leaders and subjects in typological terms, as criticizing the problems inherent in monarchical rule rather than the specific individuals who happen to rule at a given historical moment.

The *Argonautica* most clearly presents the perspective of the marginalized aristocracy of the Flavian era (Zissos 2009). There are no good rulers of any consequence to be found in the wide variety of locations visited by the Argonauts. The men with power are tyrants like Pelias and Aeetes, and "tyrant" (*tyrannus*) has become the epic's basic term for "ruler". Aeetes (*Arg.* 5.264, 5.319, etc.), Amycus (4.751), Laomedon (2.577), Pelias (1.30, 1.71, etc.), and Styruis (5.258, 6.44, etc.) are all described as *tyrannus*. One strategy for survival is to adopt the dissimulative behavior characteristic of the early imperial courtier (Hershkowitz 1998b, 242–74). Both Jason and his father Aeson contemplate rousing the senators (*patres*) to revolution against the tyrant Pelias (*Arg.* 1.71–3, 1.757–61). This image of a senatorial coup (one likely to fail) is hardly the only cue in the epic's first book to read mythological Iolcus as an early imperial Rome *avant la lettre*. Pelias' hostility toward his nephew Jason has long been compared to Tiberius' hostility toward Germanicus (Summers 1894, 55), while the suicide of Jason's parents recalls many of the suicides enforced upon luckless aristocrats, as recounted by Tacitus (McGuire 1997, 189–97).

The "gentle" (*mitis*) king Adrastus in the *Thebaid* (1.467, 7.537, etc.) and "unwarlike" Lycomedes in the *Achilleid* (*inbelli*, 1.207) are weak monarchs, unable or unaware of the need to protect their daughters from strangers. The careers of Eteocles and Creon (who succeeds to the Theban throne after the brothers have killed one another) illustrate the "unspeakable" (*nefas*) crime of tyrannical corruption (Ganiban 2007, 176–206); in particular, Eteocles' "mercantile" sensibility leads him to callous trading in the lives of his Theban soldiers (Coffee 2008, 241–71). On the traditional reading, Theseus is the epic's one righteous and powerful monarch, the appropriate agent to punish the abominable Creon who denies burial to the Argive dead (Vessey 1973, 307–16; Braund 1996a; Ripoll 1998, 221–2). Recent criticism has been more alert to this character's propensity to the same madness that drives the other rulers to destruction and to the structural threat that his absolute monarchy poses to the welfare of his subjects and suppliants (Ahl 1986, 2896; Dominik 1994, 92–8; Hershkowitz 1998a, 296–301). The absence in the *Thebaid* of forms of political power other than the absolute ruler's whim leaves his subjects only with the slender hope that they will be on the right side of his *clementia* (Ganiban 2007, 207–32; Coffee 2009).

The Flavian epics employ some of the same representational strategies found in Roman historiography and biography to characterize tyrants. The pattern of deceptive calm alternating with undisguised anger exemplified by Pelias and Aeetes in Valerius and Eteocles and by Creon in Statius calls to mind the unforgettable portrait of the emperor Tiberius in Tacitus' *Annales*. Eteocles distances himself from all human social ties like Tacitus' Tiberius or Pliny's Domitian (Braund 1996b). Valerius' Pelias (*Arg.* 1.709–29), Statius' Oedipus (*Theb.* 11.601–33), and Silius' Pacuvius (*Pun.* 11.360) reveal an unexpected level of humanity by weeping over their sons like Virgil's Mezentius (*Aen.* 10.843–56), though not all follow the Virgilian tyrant's example of regretting the shame that their crimes have brought to their descendants (Scaffai 1986; Franchet d'Espèrey 1999, 297–301; Bernstein 2008, 145–50).

Though hardly unexpected for a narrative set in the glory days of the Roman republic, the inclusion of a number of virtuous leaders in the *Punica* nevertheless presents an important contrast to the other Flavian epics. Yet personality and situation impose significant limitations upon good leaders. The elderly Fabius' guerrilla warfare is the best strategy for Rome to adopt in the early years of Hannibal's invasion, but he must ultimately yield to the young Scipio's call for an invasion of North Africa (*Pun.* 16.592–700; Marks 2005, 101–10). The narrative attributes some of the obstacles placed in the path of good leaders to the political competition characteristic of the middle Republic. The senate errs in taking away Fabius' dictatorship, and the leader's decision to rescue the army of his consular colleague Minucius from destruction becomes a testament to his selfless patriotic virtue (*Pun.* 7.515–750; Bernstein 2008, 139–45). No such choice is available to Paullus, however, to save Rome from the disaster at Cannae provoked by his impetuous colleague Varro (Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy 1986, 2531–6). The narrator relates Varro's refusal to heed the counsel of wiser leaders to his low social origins and the incentives for success through demagoguery under republican government (*Pun.* 8.246–52). Varro is also “a symbol of dissidence and internal strife” (Ariemma 2010, 252) who prefigures the civil wars. Scipio the successful military commander has been read as a proto-*princeps* (Marks 2005, 209–44), but also one whose charismatic autocracy suggests the future untenability of the Republic in the face of an ambitious and successful commander (Marks 2005, 61–110).

Each of the Flavian epics includes a panegyric of the Flavian dynasty (*Arg.* 1.5–21, *Theb.* 1.15–31, *Ach.* 1.14–19, *Pun.* 3.594–629). On the one hand, such passages represent the fulfillment of imperial expectations. Valerius exempts himself from writing an historical epic on the Flavian conquest of Jerusalem, because Domitian is already doing so. Statius' similar gesture of *recusatio*, deferring an epic on Domitian's wars, adapts a common Augustan convention (Nauta 2006). Silius' location of his Flavian panegyric in a Jovian prophecy recalls the prophecies delivered by Virgil's Jupiter and Anchises. On the other hand, readers alert to the negative portrayal of monarchical power in Flavian epic question the sincerity of the poets' praises (Dominik 1994, 135–48). The doubts regarding the sincerity of imperial panegyric in the epics of Ovid and Lucan lend cogency to such interrogations (Dewar 1994; Miller 2009, 332–4). Yet the attempts to find subversive “hidden messages” in the panegyrics have been largely unpersuasive. It poses no insurmountable contradiction to call attention to the potential for abuse in an autocratic system while praising the reigning autocrat himself for his virtue, benevolence, and success.

3 Gods and mortals

The events of 68–69 CE are proof for Tacitus that “the gods concern themselves not with our peace of mind, but with vengeance” (*non esse curae deis securitatem nostram, esse ultionem*, Tac. *Hist.* 1.3). Galba's decision to ignore the bad omens attending his adoption of Piso exemplifies the arrogance that dooms his brief reign, a punctual contrast with Vespasian's caution upon receiving the omens that mark him out for rule (Tac. *Hist.* 1.18, 2.78, 4.81–4; Levick 1999, 67–70). The war that Vespasian launches against Rome concludes with the burning of the Capitol, an event which Tacitus represents as “the

most grievous and most disgusting crime” to have occurred “since the founding of the city,” especially when the gods would otherwise have been “favorable, if our morals permitted it” (*id facinus post conditam urbem luctuosissimum foedissimumque rei publicae populi Romani accidit... propitiis, si per mores nostros liceret, deis*, Tac. *Hist.* 3.72). The Flavian epics’ generally pessimistic view of the relationship between gods and human beings is consonant with Tacitus’ picture of a society that has abandoned its religious sensibilities.

The Roman epic tradition anticipates Tacitus in condemning both crimes against the gods and the gods’ indifference and hostility. The divinities of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* engage in thoughtless violence or premeditated vengeance against human beings. Lucan’s Caesar commits a number of sacrilegious acts, most notably the looting of the Roman treasury housed in the temple of Saturn and the cutting down of the sacred grove at Massilia. Caesar refers to the latter deed as deliberate *nefas* on his part (Luc. 3.112–68, 399–452). But Lucan’s gods are also culpable in their neglect of human affairs. The clearest proof for the narrator of the gods’ indifference is the fact that they permit Romans to deify in their place the Caesars who removed their liberty (Luc. 7.444–59). After Lucan’s experiment of removing the gods as agents from epic, the Flavian epicists return the genre to its traditional course by implicating them in the significant aspects of narrative causality. Yet many of Lucan’s indictments of the gods remain uncontested in Flavian epic. Though some characters knowingly choose to offend the gods, far more often the hostile gods perpetrate unmerited violence upon large groups of innocent people.

The *Argonautica* narrates two vendettas between hostile gods and innocent populations. The Lemnians withhold sacrifice from Venus in disapproval of her adultery with Mars and in sympathy with her husband Vulcan, whom they sheltered after Jupiter threw him out of heaven (*Arg.* 2.82–100). Venus responds by inducing a temporary madness in the Lemnian women that causes them to murder the island’s male population (*Arg.* 2.101–241). Hypsipyle’s rescue of her father Thoas from the murderous women (*Arg.* 2.242–305), a restaging of the Virgilian Aeneas’ rescue of his father from burning Troy, serves to emphasize Valerius’ radical refiguration of Venus (Clare 2004; Elm von der Osten 2007). Virgil’s Aeneas initially chooses to die in Troy and must be prompted by his mother Venus to rescue his family and thus start becoming a hero of *pietas* (duty) (*Aen.* 2.589–620). In Valerius’ Lemnian episode, by contrast, Venus is the destroyer of families and Hypsipyle becomes the heroine of *pietas* on her own initiative. The *Argonautica* thereby presents readers with a difficult paradox: readers inclined to agree with the Lemnians’ condemnation of adultery must somehow reconcile Venus’ destruction of Lemnian society with her role as foremother of the Roman race. The following book of the epic sees the collective punishment of an entire people for the offense of a single individual. After Cyzicus, unaware of the creature’s special status, slays Cybele’s lion (*Arg.* 3.20–31), the goddess implicates his subjects in her vengeance. She causes the Argonauts, whom Cyzicus had hospitably received and sent on their way, inadvertently to return to their former host and, in the nighttime obscurity, to do battle with and kill him and many of his innocent people (*Arg.* 3.32–273). Valerius frames the misguided battle as a form of civil war, as well as a specific prefiguration of the later civil conflict at Colchis (Manuwald 1999).

Even the *Argonautica*'s representation of the gods might appear overly optimistic when set against the *Thebaid*. Jupiter's failure to govern the world nominally placed under his control will be discussed in section 5 of this chapter. Collective guilt in the eyes of the gods is the basic human condition in this world. In Tiresias' words, the Thebans are all "criminals" (*sontes*, *Theb.* 10.610) because of their founder Cadmus' killing of the dragon, sacred to Mars. At the end of the epic's first book, the aged king Adrastus recounts to his guests the story of Apollo's destructive visit to Argos (*Theb.* 1.557–672): the god devastates the Argives with a monster and a plague after the death of the child produced by his rape of the princess Psamathe. The formal structure of Adrastus' narration, accompanied by a hymn in praise of the god (*Theb.* 1.696–720) evokes the Virgilian Evander's account of Hercules to his guest Aeneas (*Aen.* 8.184–305), but the content is directly opposed. Hercules rids Evander's kingdom of a destructive monster, whereas Apollo subjects the Argives to excessive and arbitrary punishment. The god's reluctant response to the brave Coroebus' challenge demonstrates the irrelevance of *pietas* in Statius' world and human beings' dependence on the *clementia* of gods and monarchs (Ganiban 2007, 9–23). The episode offers a programmatic introduction of themes that will recur throughout the *Thebaid*: "the cruelty of the gods; the untimely death of young children; the dominant role played by monsters from Hell; the important anguish of mothers; the sickening of the fields; and the overturning of social structure and civic order" (Newlands 2009, 360). Apollo mistreats even his nominal favorites: he withholds from Amphiarus essential information that could have prevented the war and saved his prophet's life (*Theb.* 1.398–400). After sending Amphiarus to his death on the first day of battle, Apollo confesses that "I am cruel and unworthy of worship" (*saevus ego inmeritusque coli*, *Theb.* 9.657).

With the exception of Capaneus, who deliberately abuses the gods, it is generally difficult to attribute sacrilegious acts in the *Thebaid* entirely to human agency. Divine compulsion most often causes human beings to commit such offenses. Venus compels the Lemnian women's horrific sacrifice of a young boy as preparation for the slaughter of their menfolk (*Theb.* 5.152–63), while the Fury's malice prompts Tydeus' act of cannibalism that causes Minerva to withhold immortality from him (*Theb.* 8.757–8). Tiresias' request for the sacrifice of Menoeceus suggests the impossibility of final expiation. The prophet calls for the death of the "latest-born" (*novissimus*, *Theb.* 10.613) descendant of the dragon's teeth in order to placate the angry dragon killed by Cadmus the founder of Thebes. Such an individual is born every generation, and sacrifice itself usually takes the form of a regularly repeating event rather than an act of closure (Feeney 2004, 10–11). As a narrative that repeatedly evokes Roman civil war (see earlier in this chapter), the *Thebaid* seems to suggest that more expiation will be needed for the Romans to restore proper relations with their gods in the wake of the crimes of 68–69 CE.

The *Punica* presents a more optimistic view of the Roman people's relationship with their gods. An engaged Jupiter, a contrast to the malevolent and incompetent god of the *Thebaid*, views the war as a test of the Roman people's virtue (see later in this chapter). Positive omens repeated throughout the *Punica* mark out Jupiter's son Scipio for rule (Marks 2005, 163–206). His victory over the Carthaginians is both the final proof of his divine descent and the signal contribution to his prefiguration of the *princeps* (Marks 2005, 218–44). Roman failure to observe the gods' warnings is typically the result of individual commanders' rash decisions. Flaminius' decision to ignore the omens before

the battle at Lake Trasimene (Cic. *Div.* 1.77) and Varro's similar decision at Cannae bring defeat to Roman armies, but do not involve the entire Roman people in inexpiable religious guilt (Ariemma 2010). This is not to suggest, however, that the Romans remain entirely free of moral condemnation. The Saguntines uphold their loyalty to Rome even as Hannibal destroys their city (Küppers 1986). Their collective self-sacrifice constitutes an indictment of the Romans' failure to honor *fides*, one of the epic's chief virtues (Dominik 2006).

4 Lands and peoples

Virgil's description of the shield of Aeneas offers the subsequent epic tradition a compelling fantasy of an internally unified Rome that dominates the rest of the world. While Aeneas remains "ignorant of the events" (*rerumque ignarus*, *Aen.* 8.730) that the god Vulcan has prophetically engraved in the shield, the Roman reader is presented with both an exculpation of recent history and an optimistic view of the near future. The battle of Actium is cast as an external war, fought against foreign armies and alien gods (*Aen.* 8.671–713). The world's peoples, now under Roman domination, pay tribute to Augustus at his triumph (*Aen.* 8.714–28). Lucan's *Bellum Civile* rejects this fantasy: the narrator opens the epic with the protest that external conquest should have been chosen in preference to civil war (Luc. 1.8–23), an argument repeated by various characters in the epic (e.g., 2.43–56, 8.420–6). The Trojan inheritance that the *Aeneid* makes such an important part of the identity of the Roman people and the legitimacy of the ruling house comes under similar attack. Caesar's promise to rebuild the barren wasteland of Troy, even as his armies devastate Rome, leads the reader to question where his priorities lie (Luc. 9.990–9).

The narrative of the monogenetic descent of the Theban people from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus contrasts with the Roman myth of hybrid descent from Trojan refugees and indigenous Latins. A significant point of resemblance for both cities, however, is their common origins in civil wars that recur throughout their history. The prophetess Manto observes that the earth-born men (*terrigenae*), who fought one another immediately after springing to life, continue to preserve their hatred even in death (*Theb.* 4.556–60). Her father Tiresias describes the war fought at Thebes as the inevitable response to the bloodguilt incurred by Cadmus, which can only be expiated by the sacrifice of one of the earth-born men's descendants. Autochthonous origins therefore provide no guarantee of societal unity: the Thebans' monogenetic descent instead provides a warrant for endlessly repeated civil war.

Alterations to the landscape in the *Thebaid* evoke an aesthetic program. Bacchus attempts to delay the invasion of his beloved city by causing a drought that diverts the Argives to Nemea in search of water (*Theb.* 4.646–830). The army remains in Nemea for two further books of the epic, engaged in the peaceful activities of attending to Hypsipyle's story and holding funeral games for Archemorus. The stream in which the Argives slake their thirst recalls the pure stream favored by the tradition of Callimachean poetry in contrast to the swollen river of epic. The army's fouling of the stream (*Theb.* 4.816–30) forecasts both the martial narrative, antithetical to Callimachean poetics, that inevitably follows, as well as the acts of excessive violence that characterize this particular

conflict. The drought that halts the narrative's forward motion stands in punctual opposition to the raging river that symbolizes the onset of war (*Theb.* 3.671–6), as well as to the traditional image of epic narrative as a poetic voyage over a boundless sea (McNelis 2007, 76–96). The landscape is also an engaged participant in the civil war at Thebes. On the first day of battle, a chasm in the earth swallows up Amphiarus (*Theb.* 7.794–823) and thereby causes him to engage in a parodic reversal of the typical epic descent to the underworld (*catabasis*). The visit by Laius' ghost to the upper world and Capaneus' attempted assault on heaven are further examples of the destabilization of boundaries in Statius' poetic universe (Hardie 1993, 77–80).

The destruction of the landscape perpetrated by human beings involves the same excessive and morally repugnant behavior associated with the war (Newlands 2004). As the Argives cut down a grove in order to build Archemorus' pyre, the land itself grieves along with its divine inhabitants, including the gods Pales and Silvanus whose names recall the Italian countryside praised in Virgil's *Georgics*. The excision of the grove recalls the act of *nefas* perpetrated by Lucan's Caesar at Massilia (discussed in section 3 of this chapter), while a simile calls attention to the Argives' thoughtless violence by comparing the destruction to the unrestrained looting of a captured city (*Theb.* 6.107–17). The war at Thebes that follows shortly after involves a similar offense to the landscape. The river Ismenos complains that the warriors fighting around him have choked his stream with corpses (*Theb.* 9.429–39). In a striking reversal of Lucan's plea to divert violence into external war rather than civil war, the river asks Bacchus why he prefers Eastern conquest to defending his home turf (*Theb.* 9.439–41).

The *Argonautica* opens with what appears to be a positive answer to Lucan's demand for external war. Celebration of Flavian conquest thoroughly effaces memory of the turmoil of 68–69 CE. Vespasian achieves "greater fame" than both the Argonauts and the Julio-Claudians for "opening the sea" during Claudius' British campaign (*tuque o pelagi cui maior aperti/fama*, Val. Fl. 1.7–8). Domitian sings of his brother Titus' conquest of Jerusalem (1.12–14): Vespasian's sons thereby present an image of familial harmony that contrasts with the dynastic violence under Claudius and Nero. Jupiter's support of the Argonautic expedition reflects both the Flavian succession and Rome's imperial expansion. The narrator observes that Jupiter arranges the expedition out of disdain for the "laziness of his father's reign," while Jason exhorts his comrades with the claim that Jupiter encourages "interchange in the world" (*patrii neque enim probat otia regni*, *Arg.* 1.500; *ipse suo uoluit commercia mundo/Iuppiter*, 1.246–7). These are not uniquely positive reflections of the Flavians' successes, however: Jupiter endeavors to clear away the last surviving elements of the Golden Age (Zissos 2008, 302–4), and human beings remain unaware of the violence that his plan will bring to the world (Manuwald 2009).

Even as it celebrates the most historically significant Roman victory over a foreign people, the *Punica* invites the reader to reevaluate familiar cultural stereotypes. By representing the Saguntines as the true people of *fides*, loyal to their Roman allies even to the point of their obliteration, Silius disturbs the traditional contrast between the "faithful" Romans and "perfidious" Carthaginians. Masinissa and Anna further blur the line of division between "civilized" Romans and "barbarian" North Africans. Numerous markers assimilate the Numidian prince Masinissa to the Romans he supports, such as the fire omen that aligns him with Virgil's Ascanius and Livy's Servius Tullius, and the array of Roman virtues, most importantly *fides*, credited by the narrator both to him and

to his mother (*Pun.* 16.118–23, 16.140–8; see Ripoll 2003; Augoustakis 2008). The Phoenician princess Anna who fled with her sister Dido to North Africa, now resident in Italy as the goddess Anna Perenna and the recipient of Italian cult (*Pun.* 8.200–1), presents a yet more difficult problem in assigning ethnic affiliation and loyalty. She answers Juno's request to inspire Hannibal to fight the battle of Cannae, the Romans' worst defeat, by adverting to their common descent from Belus (*Pun.* 8.220–1).

Anachronistic fantasy infuses many of Silius' representations of the inhabitants of Italy and their land. Jupiter's praise of the Sabine origins of the Flavian *gens* evokes the hardihood and moral uprightness traditionally associated with this people in Roman poetry (*Pun.* 3.594–6; see Mezzanotte 1995). The Cannae episode offers the vision of an internally unified peninsula that effaces the historical legacy of conflict between Romans and their subordinated Italian allies. Groups that either did not participate in the battle of Cannae, such as the Praenestines (*Pun.* 8.365), or actually supported Hannibal (the Ligurians, 8.605), appear now on the Roman side. The subsequent treachery by the luxurious Capuans prefigures the moral decline that, according to Silius' melancholy diagnosis, will eventually engulf the entire society (see section 5 of this chapter). The catalog of Italians ascribes primitive lifestyles to various groups, such as the Bruttians' dependence on hunting and the Salernians' sickle-shaped swords (*Pun.* 8.571, 583), as if Italy were still under Saturn's rule. Many of these details derive from Virgil's account of primitive Italy in the latter half of the *Aeneid* and thus recall the original violence of the Trojan invasion (Ariemma 2000: 126–7, 134). Silius' account of the hero Falernus (*Pun.* 7.162–211), who gives his name to a famous Italian vintage, has been read as an endorsement of Domitian's support for Italian viticulture (Mezzanotte 1995). The assault by the wind Vulturnus on the Romans at Cannae at Juno's command (*Pun.* 9.491–523), however, indicates that the landscape of Italy does not universally support the Roman defenders against the Carthaginian invaders.

5 Modes of representing history

The *Aeneid* represents the progress of Roman history through the optimistic prophecies of Jupiter and Anchises, each associated with panegyric of the Augustan house, though the inconsistencies detectable in such passages may raise doubts about the inevitability of their fulfillment (O'Hara 1990). In the final book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Pythagoras presents a contingent view of historical causation, in which constant change is the only remaining certainty (*Met.* 15.75–478). Lucan's narrator proceeds from the doubts encoded by prior tradition to outright protest against having to relate history. The narrator's frequent proposals of counterfactual scenarios that would have led to a better fate for the Roman people exemplify the epic's "conflict between the will to tell the story and the horror which shies from telling it" (Masters 1992, 9).

At the beginning of the *Argonautica* (1.531–67), Valerius' Jupiter delivers a prophecy that forecasts the *translatio imperii* (transfer of power) resulting from the Argonautic expedition. Scholars conventionally refer to the speech as Jupiter's *Weltenplan* (Wacht 1991). The prophecy recalls the Virgilian Jupiter's similar revelation of the fate of the Aeneadae to Venus (*Aen.* 1.254–96), while the other gods' protests evoke the Virgilian council of the gods (*Aen.* 10.1–117). Medea's removal from Asia to Greece will give rise

to the Trojan War, a narrative of causation well known from the historiographical tradition (Zissos 2008, 314–5). The Roman reader may have been eager to see an optimistic prefiguration of the nascent Roman empire in Jupiter's promise that he will "soon cherish other peoples" after the period of Greek domination (*gentesque fovebo / max alias*, *Arg.* 1.555–6). No guarantee, however, that the succession of powers will in fact end with the Romans can be read in this ambiguous reference. While that future remains unknown to Roman readers, Valerius makes clear in the meantime how the process of *translatio imperii* brings undeserved sufferings to both Colchians and Greeks. In the manner of Lucan's narrator, though hardly so frequently, Valerian characters protest against the unfolding of history. The obligation to narrate the massacre at Lemnos causes Valerius' narrator to wish that someone would "stop him from singing true things" (*o qui me vera canentem / sistat*, *Arg.* 2.218–9). At the divine council (*Arg.* 1.505–27), Sol pleads on behalf of his son Aeetes, whom the Argonauts will soon despoil of both his Fleece and his children, and learns from Jupiter's prophecy that Fate is no respecter of persons. When the Argonauts learn about the Trojan war from their prophet Mopsus (*Arg.* 8.395–9), their reaction is to criticize their leader Jason for forgetting that his mission was to recover the Fleece, not to find a wife whose arrival will cause the destruction of their country (Bernstein 2008, 59–61). The epic's pessimism derives in no small part from characters' awareness of their inability to prevent the progress of historical events.

While world history in the *Argonautica* appears to be under Jupiter's overall control, the *Thebaid* puts in question the supreme god's ability to manage even a local conflict. The events of the epic's first book show that it is the Fury who actually instigates the conflict between the brothers in her response to Oedipus' curse (*Theb.* 1.46–141) and that Jupiter is merely playing a game of catch-up when he claims to have ordained the war at Thebes as a deserved punishment (*Theb.* 1.214–47: see Hill 1996; Herschkowitz 1998a, 260–8; Franchet d'Espèrey 1999, 216–26). While moral evaluation may be irrelevant in the case of the Fury, who makes no pretense to justice, Jupiter's claim to enact just retribution on both Thebes and Argos by means of the war is immediately called into question. As Juno observes, it is arbitrary to punish Argos for the long-past crimes of Tantalus when other cities have had ample opportunity to offend Jupiter in the mean time (*Theb.* 1.266–70: see Ahl 1986, 2834–41; Feeney 1991, 355). Jupiter complements the injustice of his punishment with the irresponsibility of his failure to see it through. He commands the other gods to avert their eyes from the brothers' duel, yields control of the Theban battlefield to the Furies, and never acts again in the epic (*Theb.* 11.122–33: see Bernstein 2004). The epic's presentation of a cruel, arbitrary, and feckless Jupiter has suggested criticism of the emperor whom Flavian encomia regularly represent as "our" Jupiter (Sauter 1934, 54–78). The narrator of *Silvae* 1.6, however, suggests a reading strategy both less reductive and less subversive: Domitian can be better than the Jupiter of the epic tradition and a *praesens deus* (present god) where the Olympian god is more often distant and indifferent (Newlands 2003; Chinn 2008).

The protest against history in the *Thebaid* generally takes the form of counterfactuals: the narrator wishes, for example, that Polynices had died in the chariot race before actually bringing war to Thebes (*Theb.* 6.513–17; see Nagel 1999). Where Valerius prayed for an interruption in his narration of the massacre at Lemnos, Statius' narrator attempts to control the reception of unwished-for episodes in his narrative. He prays that the moral nadir of the epic, the duel between the brothers, be forgotten by others and serve

only as a lesson for kings (*Theb.* 11.576–9; see Georgacopoulou 1998). To predetermine such a selective reading is, of course, quite impossible. The very extravagance of the narrator's wish calls attention to the disingenuousness of Lucan's bid to control the future reception of his epic (*Bell. Civ.* 7.207–13), his claim that his future readers will favor Pompey in reading about the battle of Pharsalus (the same episode which he earlier protested against narrating). Statius calls attention to the poet's complicity in preserving the memory of events that he claims to deplore. Attempts to disavow responsibility for narrating them in epic verse may be as disingenuous as Jupiter's averting of his eyes from the war that he has set in motion.

Silius represents the Punic wars as history already prefigured by Dido's curse in the *Aeneid*. As she kills herself, Virgil's Dido exhorts "some avenger" to "rise from her bones," and the oath taken by Silius' young Hannibal in Dido's temple provides the answer to her prayer (*exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor*, *Aen.* 4.625; *Pun.* 1.81–139; see Laudizi 1989, 102–7; Bernstein 2008, 135–9). In contrast to the other Flavian epics, Jupiter offers a prophecy of a Roman future linked explicitly to imperial panegyric. As he consoles a Venus worried on behalf of her descendants, Silius' Jupiter describes the second Punic war not as a punishment sent on the Romans but as an opportunity to recall them to a greater level of virtue – one from which they will once more inevitably decline (*Pun.* 3.575–90). From such a perspective, initial defeat at the hands of the Carthaginians is not to be lamented but to be celebrated as a spur to Roman virtue. Silius' narrator protests not against the losses of defeat but the corruption brought by victory, as when he concludes his narration of the defeat at Cannae with the observation: "This was Rome then: if it stood fixed in Fate that its morals would change after you [fell], Carthage, would that you still remained!" (*haec tum Roma fuit: post te cui vertere mores | si stabat fatis, potius, Carthago, maneres*, *Pun.* 10.657–8; see Fowler 2000, 115–37; Tipping 2007).

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FURTHER READING

On Flavian epic generally, Hardie (1993) remains the best brief survey of the genre. Forthcoming essay collections on Flavian poetry include the *Oxford Readings* edited by Augoustakis (2016) and the *Blackwell Companion* edited by Fratantuono (forthcoming). Recent collections include Augoustakis 2014 (Flavian epic and Greek tradition), Augoustakis 2013 (ritual and religion), Manuwald and Voigt 2013 (interaction between the Flavian epics and other literary genres), and Nauta, van Dam, and Smolenaars 2006 (essays on Flavian poetry). Studies of individual themes in Flavian epic include Lovatt 2013 (the gaze), Augoustakis 2010b (motherhood and foreignness), Bernstein 2008 (kinship), Keith 2000 (gender), Hershkovitz 1998a (madness), Ripoll 1998 (moral heroism), McGuire 1997 (suicide), and Feeney 1991 (the gods).

For Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, see the recent *Brill's Companion to Valerius Flaccus*, edited by Heerink and Manuwald (2014). Hershkovitz 1998b provides a helpful overview of themes and poetic technique. Recent articles building on the discussion of Valerius' epic in Feeney 1991 are Manuwald 2009 (on prophecy) and Zissos 2012 (on Medea's victimization by scheming divinities). Whereas most modern scholarship, this chapter included, reads the *Argonautica* as reflecting the perspective of the marginalized aristocracy in the Flavian era, Stover's recent monograph (2012) offers a rather more upbeat reading of the *Argonautica*, as expressing a sense of optimism during the principate of Vespasian.

The new *Brill's Companion to Statius* (edited by Dominik, Gervais, and Newlands, 2015) surveys a wide range of aspects of the poet's work. Much recent work has focused on how Statius' *Thebaid* interacts with earlier poetry, including Ganiban 2007 (Virgil) and Newlands 2004 (Ovid); broad issues of poetics and genre are well discussed in McNelis 2007 (Callimachean poetics); links to contemporary culture are explored by Lovatt 2005 (games). On Statius' *Achilleid*, Heslin 2005 (focusing on the figure of Achilles) is the only book-length study of the poem in English.

The best current introductions to Silius Italicus' *Punica* are Stocks 2014 and *Brill's Companion to Silius Italicus*, edited by Augoustakis (2010a). For studies of individual themes, see Tipping 2010 (exemplarity) and Marks 2005 (representation of Scipio).

CHAPTER 23

Epigram and Occasional Poetry: Social Life and Values in Martial's *Epigrams* and Statius' *Silvae*

William J. Dominik

Introduction

With respect to poetic genres other than epic, two names tower above the rest for the Flavian period: Martial (circa 40 – circa 103 CE; born in Bilbilis, Spain), whose *Epigrams* appeared between circa 80 and circa 102, and Statius (circa 45–96 CE; born in Naples), whose *Silvae* were published between circa 93 and circa 96. Both were celebrated poets who circulated in prestigious Roman literary circles and enjoyed connections to the imperial court. It is thus remarkable that, despite their similar literary profiles and the fact that their lives overlapped for five decades, neither refers to the other in their copious extant poetry (see Ripoll 2002). This silence has led some critics to suspect hostility between the two (for example, Martin 1939, 462–3; Zehnacker and Fredouille 1993, 309), but whatever the relationship of their authors, the *Epigrams* and the *Silvae* naturally invite comparison with each other since they belong to genres that offer reflections on contemporary life and the expression of personal feelings. Indeed, in addition to mining these poems for hints of mutual hostility (for example, Heuvel 1932; Henriksén 1998; Camera 2007), critics have explored points of contact in regard to the individuals mentioned (for example, Martin 1939; White 1975), the subjects and occasions of their poetry (for example, Martin 1939; White 1974), and the system of patronage (for example, White 1974; Nauta 2002). When such comparative analyses have looked at common themes, they have usually focused on poems with the same addressees (for example, Martin 1939; Bucheit 1960; Garthwaite 1984 and 1993; Henriksén 1998; Kershaw 1997; Lorenz 2003; Chinn 2005). This chapter will undertake a more broadly conceived comparison of Martial's and Statius' representations of Roman social life, values, and attitudes.

Martial's *Epigrams* and Statius' *Silvae* divulge much about the social life and climate of the Flavian age, especially during the reign of Domitian. In addition, the *Epigrams*

and *Silvae* reflect the social and cultural values and practices of those who feature in them, including, of course, the poets themselves. Although the *Epigrams* have a different feel and perspective from the *Silvae*, both Martial and Statius were responding as *poets* to contemporary social and cultural conditions in Flavian Rome. The *Epigrams* range across the spectrum of literary and human experience. Martial depicts scenes and figures from everyday city life (cf. *Ep.* 8.3.19–20), without necessarily striving for a realistic treatment. Instead he takes stereotypical situations and characters and satirizes, hyperbolizes, distorts, and ridicules them. The result is an astonishing kaleidoscope of images, cameos, vignettes, and caricatures. Martial shows an awareness of the potential to cause offence since he appears often to have used fictitious names when dispensing criticism, while using real names in favorable or neutral treatments. Statius features real individuals and events in his *Silvae*, but in contrast to Martial he avoids the shadowy side of life in Rome and Naples and instead focuses on the more dignified and uplifting aspects of elite culture. The similarities and differences in their approaches emerge from an examination of their respective depictions of social classes, patronage and exchange, the social function and symbolic value of Roman architecture and decorative arts (the amphitheater, private homes, baths, tombs, *objets d'art*, and domestic items), sex and gender, and death and life.

1 Socio-economic classes

In moving freely between the elite world of affluence and *otium* (leisure) and the sordid environment and daily grind of the lower classes, Martial does not seem to question the validity of the social system *per se* in his short, witty epigrams. Rather he reveals an appreciation for wealth and a corresponding disdain for poverty. At the same time, though, he often adopts the stance of an outraged observer of societal corruption, absurdity, and perversity at all levels from slave to emperor. Statius, by contrast, presents a comparatively coherent picture of the privileged existence of an upper class that enjoys immense material wealth and shares a distinctive set of cultural values and ideals. Statius seems to accept more readily the ideological substructures that underpin Roman society, as suggested by the absence in the *Silvae* of the ambivalence shown toward the upper classes in the *Epigrams*. He frequently offers praise, especially to his patrons, and the tone of such poetry is elevated and deferential. Despite differences of style and approach, Martial and Statius both project an essentially conservative and hierarchical view of Roman society.

Atop the social and political hierarchy in the *Epigrams* and *Silvae* is the emperor himself, whose ultimate control over his subjects is frequently on display in Martial's *Liber Spectaculorum* (on which see also CHAPTER 20, FLAVIAN SPECTACLE, section 2). This collection not only paid homage to the emperor (for example, 7, 20, 33) but also showed him controlling the games' proceedings and the lives of its contestants, as when calling for the gladiators to enter the arena (23) or declaring both combatants victors in a gladiatorial contest (31). Martial exalts "good" emperors, among whom he includes Titus (for example, *Spect.* 2.11–12, 3.12), and lauds their exploits, whereas he condemns "bad" emperors, notably Nero (for example, *Spect.* 2; *Ep.* 7.21.3). Domitian is a more complex case, whose treatment hinges on the chronological watershed 96 CE, the year of his assassination and the advent of a new imperial dynasty (see CHAPTER 1, SOURCES

AND EVIDENCE, section 1). Martial effusively praises the living Domitian for exploits such as military victories (*Ep.* 2.2, 5.19, 7.6, 8.65) and moral reforms (6.2, 9.7), but after Domitian's death this praise is recanted and the harshness of his reign is stressed (for example, 10.72, 12.3.11–12). Statius praises Domitian and his principate in the *Silvae* (for example, 1.1.61–2, 4.3.135, 5.1.261), as well as in the prologs of the *Thebaid* (1.1–45, esp. 17–33) and *Achilleid* (1.14–19), and possibly in *De Bello Germanico* (cf. *Silv.* 4.2.63–7). Some critics have suggested that even the overt flattery of Domitian by the two poets conceals a subtext critical of the emperor (see for example, Ahl 1984, 91–101 on *Silv.* 1.1; Garthwaite 1984 on *Silv.* 3.4; Dominik 1994, 135–48 on the *Thebaid*; Holzberg 1988, 74–93 on the *Epigrams*; Garthwaite 1990 on *Ep.* 6; Garthwaite 1993 on *Ep.* 9). Such readings, however interesting, fall beyond the scope of this chapter.

As already noted, the characters in the *Epigrams* range from the sophisticated and elite to the vulgar and common, while those in the *Silvae* are of the respectable upper classes. At the elite end of the social spectrum the two poets treat some of the principal literary figures of their times, including Lucan (*Ep.* 1.61.7 etc.; *Silv.* 2 pr. 24; 2.7.1, 19, 30) and Seneca (*Ep.* 4.40.2, 7.44, 7.45; *Silv.* 2.7.31), while Martial also mentions the epicist Silius Italicus (*Ep.* 4.14 etc.), the younger Pliny (*Ep.* 10.20.3), and many more besides. Martial and Statius mention some of the same patrons and prominent “friends,” including Atedius Melior, owner of a villa on the Caelian hill (*Ep.* 2.69 etc.; *Silv.* 2.1, 2.3); Argentaria Polla, Lucan's widow (*Ep.* 7.21, 10.64; *Silv.* 2.7); Earinus, Domitian's boy eunuch (*Ep.* 9.11, 9.12, 9.13; *Silv.* 3 pr. 17, 3.4); Arruntius Stella, suffect consul and love poet (*Ep.* 5.11 etc.; *Silv.* 1 pr. 1, 21; 1.2); the equestrian Claudius Etruscus (*Ep.* 6.83; 7.40; *Silv.* 1 pr. 29–30; 3.3); and the avid art collector Novius Vindex (*Ep.* 9.43, 9.44; *Silv.* 4 pr. 14; 4.6). Significant events in the lives of such figures are frequently treated: the death of Glaucias, foster son of Melior (*Ep.* 6.28, 6.29; *Silv.* 2.1); Lucan's birthday (*Ep.* 7.21 etc.; *Silv.* 2.7); the dedication of Earinus' hair (*Ep.* 9.11 etc.; *Silv.* 3.4); Stella's wedding (*Ep.* 6.21; *Silv.* 1.2), the inauguration of the baths of Etruscus (Mart. 6.42; *Silv.* 1.5); and Vindex's acquisition of a statuette of Hercules (*Ep.* 9.43, 9.44; *Silv.* 4.6).

A second broad difference in their respective depictions is that Martial is more concerned with the private world of his patrons and friends, whereas Statius tends to blend private matters with praise of the public careers of his patrons (cf. Hardie 1983, 71). Martial, for example, rarely mentions aspects of Arruntius Stella's career (*Ep.* 9.42, 12.2.10–11) in the numerous epigrams addressed to him, whereas Statius includes such references in his epithalamium honoring Stella and his bride Violentilla (*Silv.* 1.2; see White 1975, 270; Hardie 1983, 71).

Statius repeatedly praises his patrons: 28 of the 32 *Silvae* are dedicated to them. The *Silvae* celebrate the refined lifestyle of the upper classes; they do not praise wealth and material goods as ends in themselves, but rather as means to pursue a lifestyle of cultural and intellectual pursuits and also as reflections of the personal qualities of their owners. The elegant public buildings, villas, and artifacts mentioned by Statius mark out public and domestic spaces in which the elite plays out its privileged role in Roman society. Statius strives to foster a sense of shared social values and intellectual interests in this privileged group. Even the somewhat formulaic character of the *Silvae*, which is at least partly due to the influence of the rhetorical handbooks (cf. Newmyer 1979, 10–44), enhances the sense of coherence in its presentation of upper class Roman society and its institutions.

Martial strives neither for such concentration nor for such coherence; no particular socio-economic group is championed or promoted in the *Epigrams*. Although he seems to accept the Roman social order, he does so with qualification. Martial seems equally ambivalent in his presentation of the upper and lower classes. He shows an apparent lack of enthusiasm for the social and economic forces that gave rise to a new class of wealthy, powerful freedmen, but never argues specifically against upward social mobility. And while he criticizes others for abusing their slaves (2.66, 2.82, 3.13, 3.94), he nonetheless reports his own harsh treatment of slaves for disobedience or effrontery (8.23; cf. 11.58.5–10). In short, Martial's socio-cultural outlook eludes simple categorization and can even at times seem self-contradictory. This is because Martial's primary concerns transcend class identity per se: he is driven to expose hypocrisy, greed and perversity at all social levels, documenting not only sexual aberration (*Ep.* 10.52, 10.65, 10.91), profligacy (9.82, 10.31), and avarice (8.9, 8.16, 8.33, 8.44), but also stinginess (2.43, 6.11, 9.2, 10.11, 12.36), including that of his own patrons (4.46, 7.53). The satirical and mocking tone of many of his epigrams expresses shock, disgust, and outrage at the egregious behavior of individuals from all ranks of Roman society. Martial takes aim at debauchees (1.24), gluttons (1.20), drunkards (3.16), skinflints (10.17), vulgarians (8.48), busybodies (7.10), gossipmongers (2.72), braggarts (7.76), reprobates (7.10), impostors (2.29), charlatans (1.47), legacy-hunters (4.56), and many other types besides. What emerges is a composite picture of Roman society in which the established traditions and codes that underwrite the social order seem to be disintegrating. Boorish parvenu freedmen are harangued for daring to equal the opulence (for example Zoilus, 3.82, 5.79, 11.54) and social standing (2.29) of the upper classes, as are impudent slaves who aspire to follow in the footsteps of their masters (9.73). Martial also lampoons a wide range of professionals and tradespeople, from lawyers (2.64, 6.19, 12.72) and teachers (2.7, 5.56, 9.68, 10.62) to fishmongers (1.41.8, 4.86) and undertakers (1.30, 1.47, 2.61).

2 Patronage, exchange and gift-giving

Beneath the emperors in the socio-political hierarchy are members of the senatorial and equestrian classes, who count among their obligations the dispensing of patronage, especially to literary clients such as Martial and Statius, who in turn dedicate or address poems to their patrons. In accordance with convention, both poets honor their emperor and benefactors by praising them exuberantly in their poems (for example, *Ep.* 1.25, 6.83, 12.3; *Silv.* 2.2.121–155, 4.2). In places, Martial seems to poke fun at some patrons, as with Sparsus, the owner of a magnificent and tranquil villa in Rome who is unmindful of the bustle and noise that must be endured by the insomniac poet in his apartment (*Ep.* 12.57; cf. 9.68). Elsewhere Martial juxtaposes praise of his own patrons with criticism of others and even seems to ridicule the institution of patronage itself (for example, 3.36, 3.46, 5.19, 5.22, 9.2, 10.10, 10.19, 10.74, 12.29, 12.36, 12.40). A frequent object of scorn is the wealthy patron who serves his client guests vastly inferior fare at dinner:

cum vocer ad cenam non iam venalis ut ante,
 cur mihi non eadem quae tibi cena datur?
 ostrea tu sumis stagno saturata Lucrino,

sugitur inciso mitulus ore mihi:
 sunt tibi boleti, fungos ego sumo suillos:
 res tibi cum rhombo est, at mihi cum sparulo.
 aureus immodicis turtur te clunibus implet,
 ponitur in cavea mortua pica mihi.
 cur sine te ceno cum tecum, Pontice, cenem?
 sportula quod non est, prosit: edamus idem.

Mart. *Ep.* 3.60

Since I am no longer invited to dinner as a venal guest as before,
 why is the same dinner not given to me as to you?
 You take oysters fattened in the Lucrine lake;
 I suck a mussel and cut my mouth.
 You eat mushrooms; I take pig fungi.
 You tuck into turbot, but I eat bream.
 A golden turtle dove fills you with its huge rump;
 a magpie that died in its cage is placed before me.
 Why do I dine without you, Ponticus, though I dine with you? Let us
 benefit from the lack of a dole: let us eat the same food.

Both Martial and Statius mention the social conventions of exchange and gift-giving between patrons, clients, and friends. The asymmetrical nature of exchange and gift-giving relationships could render the less affluent vulnerable to exploitation or disappointment (Spisak 2007, 44–5). Although Martial grumbles about not having his dinner invitations (*Ep.* 3.27) and gifts reciprocated (4.88), he himself can only host unpretentious dinners (10.48) and give modest gifts of food and wine (10.94, 13.42, 13.119). Indeed Martial's material gifts are in stark contrast to the elegant gown (9.49) and farm in Spain (12.31) given to him, but one should be wary of Martial's frequent claims of financial exigency (for example, 6.13, 11.3; on Martial's "poverty" see Sullivan 1991, 26–9).

In *Epigram* 2.14, Martial portrays Seliu walking to the Saepta Julia, a fashionable shopping district in the Campus Martius, in order to seek a dinner invitation (5–6). The description is reminiscent of Statius wandering the Saepta Julia, encountering Vindex by chance, and being invited to dine at his villa (*Silv.* 4.6.1–4). But there is an important difference between the two scenes: whereas Seliu praises solely to receive a dinner invitation, Statius, who is taking a break from writing epic (cf. 4.6.1–2), expresses the pleasure of the dinner as not being the actual food but the emotional bond between friends and the literary and light-hearted discourse (12–13). Martial is therefore much more negative in his representation of a scene offering an opportunity for the dispensation of patronage. The benefits of the exchange in *Silvae* 4.6 – a poem on the statuette in exchange for the pleasure of intellectual conversation over dinner – are based on aesthetic and literary values rather than simply the praise of a host in exchange for dinner.

In the case of poets, of course, exchange frequently involved praise in verse, and Martial pointedly grumbles about not having such praise reciprocated in material form (*Ep.* 5.36). This complaint and Martial's observations elsewhere on the immortality his poetry could confer on patrons and friends (5.15.3–4, 5.25.5–6) underscore the value of such fame in Roman society. Statius' *Silvae* likewise stress the immortality conferred on the wealthy patrons and friends they honor: *haec tibi parva quidem genitili luce paramus/dona, sed ingenti forsan victura sub aeo* (This is the gift I bring you on your birthday; though

small indeed, perhaps it will live through the ages, 2.3.62–3; similarly 3.3.37–39, 5.1.11–13). Although Statius reaffirms the status, norms, and values of the elite class he writes about, there are occasional complaints, as in the *Epigrams*, over a lack of reciprocity in gift-giving. The principle of reciprocity, essential to the maintenance of the Roman social fabric, is manifest in *Silvae* 4.9, where Statius adopts a tone of mock indignation reminiscent of Martial in jesting with the young senator Plotius Grypus for gifting him a moth-eaten and moldy *libellum* (little book) bought for virtually nothing (10, 22) in exchange for Statius' expensive present of an elegantly embossed volume (7–9). On the whole, however, Statius affords a more favorable view of poet–patron exchanges than Martial. This difference may be attributable not just to their chosen genres but also to their respective expectations. Though not of high social standing, Statius seems to have enjoyed some of the privileges conferred upon the lofty, as suggested by his attendance at a dinner hosted by the emperor Domitian (*Silv.* 4.2.5–6), even if he was among a thousand other guests (4.2.32–3). Martial, even though receiving the *ius trium liberorum* and the military tribunate, which conferred equestrian status, seems less grateful, and is not ashamed to ask the emperor for more (*Ep.* 4.27).

3 Social function and symbolic value of Roman architecture

Both Martial and Statius provide physical descriptions of the *urbs* (city), including places of public entertainment, private buildings, and privately owned art works as a way of reflecting upon and conveying their own attitudes toward various facets of Roman life. The various figures in the *Epigrams* and *Silvae* are encountered in a panorama of settings such as the forum (for example, *Ep.* 1.2, 10.37; *Silv.* 1.1.2, 4.1.14–15), baths (*Ep.* 3.20.15–16, 12.83; *Silv.* 1.5), circus (*Ep.* 8.11.5, 12.74.2; *Silv.* 3.5.15, 5.2.21), theater (*Ep.* 2.29, 6.9; *Silv.* 3.5.9), and amphitheater (*Spect.* 17, *Ep.* 11.69; *Silv.* 1.6, 2 pr. 18). These public structures were the product of massive building programs made possible by the immense wealth that poured into Rome through taxation and conquest (see CHAPTER 8, REMAKING ROME, section 1). Both Martial and Statius draw attention to the functionality of these structures as spaces for Roman cultural life as well as the social and commercial behavior of Roman citizens, whose actions are shaped, directed, and controlled by the spaces in which they unfold. Likewise in domestic architecture the villas described by Martial and Statius are represented as controlling spaces that not only reflect the character of their owners but also have the potential to shape the types of cultural activities that take place within them.

In Martial's *Liber Spectaculorum*, one of these public buildings, the Flavian Amphitheater, finished in 80 CE or possibly (with Coleman 2006, XLV–LXIV) a little later, is the setting for wild animals being slain by gladiators (8, 11–18, 32) or other animals (21–2, 26), while gladiators and criminals, some taking on the roles of mythical characters, are depicted being torn apart by beasts (9–10, 19, 24–5). The accounts of a slaughtered lion in Martial and Statius speak to their respective sensibilities: the beast laid low in the amphitheater of the *Liber Spectaculorum* (12, 17.5–6, 21.3, 26.11) becomes a creature worthy of compassion in the *Silvae* (cf. 2.5.24–30). Although the events in the arena recounted by Martial seem cruel to modern sensibilities, it should be remembered

that Rome was a militaristic society and one that celebrated violence. The ordered violence of the amphitheater, moreover, carried particular social significance through the carefully structured and ideologically charged space in which it unfolded (see CHAPTER 20, FLAVIAN SPECTACLE, section 2).

Whereas Martial focuses on the spectacular performances in the Colosseum, the center of attention in *Silvae* 1.6 is the lavish food and entertainment provided by Domitian during the festival of the *Saturnalia* (possibly) in the same amphitheater: dates, plums, figs, pastries, apples, pears, and cakes pour down upon the crowd (1.6.10–27); napkins, bread, and other food are dispensed bountifully by handsome slave boys along with copious amounts of wine (31–3; cf. 41–2); there are combats between women and between dwarves (53–64), a show of foreign dancers and musicians (67–74); and there is a shower of exotic birds, possibly flamingos, pheasants, and guinea fowl (75–8). All sections of society – senators and equestrians and citizens of lesser rank, as well as women and children – dine together (43–50), momentarily suspending the hierarchies that are normally operative.

Opulent homes and the works of art they contain are the subjects of a number of poems in the *Silvae* and *Epigrams*. Statius conveys the impression that he is at least partly dependent upon the *otium* provided in the villas of his patrons for the composition of his poems (*Silv.* 1 pr. 29–31; cf. 1.5); this portrayal is reinforced by Statius' comparison of his own modest villa (1–20) with Septimius' rural estates that provide leisure and foster literary composition, including poetry (53–60). Martial, on the other hand, suggests that his chosen genre of epigram was due to the lack of *otium* required for more weighty genres (cf. *Ep.* 1.107, 8.55, 11.3). Though sometimes criticizing superfluous construction and empty opulence (*Ep.* 9.46, 12.50), Martial's descriptions of villas serve more often to enhance the status and reputation of his patrons. The urban villa of Julius Martialis (4.64) and country villas of Faustinus (3.58) and Apollinaris (10.30) are lauded primarily as elegant refuges from the daily bustle and business of Rome. There is also the suggestion that Martialis' villa reflects the hospitable qualities of its owner (4.64.25–30). The less frequent negative judgments are sometimes achieved through contrast, as when Martial juxtaposes Faustinus' functional villa at Baiae (3.58.1–44) with the elegant but unproductive villa of Bassus (45–51), which, much like the villa described in *Ep.* 12.50, squanders fertile land and architectural splendor.

Statius' focus on stylish villas and *objets d'art* contrasts with the emphasis upon the landscape as a *locus amoenus* in Augustan poets such as Virgil and Horace (Newlands 2002, 130–53). In the *Silvae* the villas of the Roman upper classes represent that group's ability to reshape and refine nature; they also provide the ideal domestic space for the *otium* that defines the refined lifestyle and values of the elite. And while villas reflect the economic wealth and social status of their owners, the *objets d'art* epitomize their cultural sophistication and refined lifestyles (on the symbolic significance of domestic architecture and the decorative arts in the *Silvae*, see Myers 2000; Newlands 2002; Zeiner 2005).

Statius' conception of villas as places of sophisticated leisure and luxurious refuge from the bustle and disorder of urban life pervades *Silvae* 1.3, a description of the Manilius Vopiscus' villa at Tibur (Tivoli). The poem begins by elaborating upon its striking architectural design and lavish realization. Symmetrical parts of the house lie on each side of the river Anio (2–24, 24–6); there are gilded beams, citrus wood doorposts, radiant marble, and mosaic floor; water is piped into every bedroom and into the steaming

baths; from the courtyards there are views of the river and woods; and the villa is adorned with statues and jewelry of precious metal (35–56). The peaceful setting and quiet opulence of the villa are depicted as facilitating the composition of poetry (15–30, esp. 22–3), aptly so for its owner, who is characterized as *facundus* (eloquent) at the opening of the poem and described in the preface to the first book as “rescuing from decay our now almost vanishing literature” (*vindicat a situ litteras iam paene fugientes*, 1 pr. 23–7). As the poem draws to a close the villa is said to reflect Vospiscus’ tranquil, moderate, and refined nature, and its site is portrayed as an ideal sanctuary for the exercise of his varied literary talents (90–104).

Silvae 2.2 describes the magnificent villa of Statius’ patron Pollius Felix at Surrentum (Sorrento) on the Bay of Naples. Statius expresses admiration for its natural setting, which offers stunning vistas (73–84), the immense size of the complex (36–62), and its attractive architectural features, including an extensive colonnade leading to the villa from the bay (30–35). Greek marble has been used in its construction (85–96) and imported statues and bronzes provide decoration (63–70). Statius also emphasizes its productive fields (98–111), which are emblematic of the owner’s virtuous character (29, 71–2). Here, as in *Silvae* 1.3, the villa serves as an ideal refuge for the wide-ranging literary activities (112–15) of its virtuoso poet-owner (cf. 116–17, 119–20).

The description of the villa’s impressive design and aesthetic of the villa is a prelude to the concluding account of the *otium* enjoyed by Pollius’ wife Polla and the values of generosity, moderation, and learning reflected in her character (147–54). By the end of the poem the sumptuous villa has become symbolic of the shared personal and cultural values inherent not just in the marriage of Pollius and Polla but also in the patron–client relationship between Pollius and Statius. For despite their shared status as poets, Statius marks out a position for himself and his readership on the social ladder separate from the privileged position of his patron:

... nos, vilis turba, caducis
deservire bonis semperque optare parati,
spargimur in casus: celsa tu mentis ab arce
despicias errantes humanaque gaudia rides.
Stat. *Silv.* 2.2.129–132

... We, a worthless crowd, prepared to be
slaves to transient possessions and ceaseless desires,
are tossed to chance. From your mind’s high citadel
you survey errant humans and laugh at mortal joys.

Ultimately the villa of Pollius serves emblematically to validate the social structure upon which his marriage to Polla and his relationship with Statius is based. Similarly the next poem of the *Silvae* depicts the hospitable and urbane aspects of the lavish Caelian villa of Atedius Melior as a reflection of his tranquil temperament and judicious conduct (2.3.15–16, 64–72). Statius lauds Melior for not hoarding his wealth but generously sharing it so that others can enjoy the benefits: *idem auri facilis contemptor et optimus idem/promere divitias opibusque immittere lucem* (This same man is naturally contemptuous of gold; he excels in taking out his riches and bringing his wealth to light for sharing, 70–1).

The subject of the private baths of Claudius Etruscus, a wealthy young equestrian, provides an opportunity to examine the different approaches of Martial (*Ep.* 6.42) and Statius (*Silv.* 1.5) in their use of Roman buildings as part of their poetic programs. Both poets heap praise upon Etruscus' baths, underscoring their opulence and social function. For Martial these baths, with their special waters (*Ep.* 6.42.3–7, 19–21), radiant light (8–10), varied types of marble (11–15), and bath styles (16–18), represent the definitive experience in pleasurable bathing. The epigram opens hyperbolically with a declaration to Oppianus (the poem's addressee) that he "will die unbathed" if he should go to his grave without having experienced Etruscus' baths (*Etrusci nisi thermulis lavaris, / illotus morieris, Oppiane*, 6.42.1–2), a danger portentously repeated at the end of the poem. Myers (2000, 112) suggests that Martial is amused by Etruscus' excessive pride in his extravagant baths (adducing *Ep.* 9.19 in which the poet makes fun of Sabellus for praising the baths of Ponticus in order to cadge a dinner invitation; but cf. Garthwaite 1993, 95–6). But whether arch or genuine, Martial's treatment leaves little doubt about the magnificence of what he describes.

In his much longer poem Statius describes the baths in greater detail, drawing attention, like Martial, to their splendid architectural and decorative features, including gleaming multicolored marble work (*Silv.* 1.5.12–13, 36–41), striking mosaics (42–3), luminous vaulted roof (45–6), and silver fixtures (48–50). Intriguingly, Statius may obliquely signal Martial's treatment by way of a "correction," for he specifically excludes alabaster and serpentine, both mentioned by Martial, from the marbles used (*Silv.* 1.5.35; cf. *Ep.* 6.42.14–15; see Nauta 2002, 246–7; Newlands 2012, 169 n. 142). Statius characterizes Etruscus' baths not only as an urban refuge (60–3) and source of poetic inspiration (29–30), but also as a reflection of the character and values of its builder (63–4). As a poem offering indirect praise of Etruscus while touching on the *amicitia* (friendship) that Statius presumably has benefited (or will benefit) from, *Silvae* 1.5 draws attention once again to the important institution of patronage, especially literary patronage and its reciprocity of benefits.

Yet other types of structures in the *Silvae* serve as expressions of Roman virtue and conduct, as can be seen in Statius' praise of the tomb built by Abascantus for his wife Priscilla (5.1.225–41). The tomb's massive size, marble construction, and statues of various gods adorned with the features of Priscilla reflect not only Abascantus' social standing (37–41), character (76–9), wealth (cf. 222–46), devotion to his wife, and grief over her death, but also her virtuous character (65–6, 117–18, 121–6; cf. 154–5) and conjugal *pietas* (piety; 43–64, 66–74, 109–116, 119–21, 127–34, 183–4, 258–62; cf. 154). Martial alludes frequently to tombs, though without dwelling upon their architectural features. Some of these tombs attest to an individual's social or military rank (for example, *Ep.* 1.93, 6.76, 8.3), whereas others are mentioned in contexts that suggest the depth of affection of the builder for the deceased (for example, 6.28, 6.52, 7.96, 11.91).

4 Decorative arts and domestic items

Numerous *objets d'art* and domestic items, many of which reflect the ideology of exchange and gift=giving, appear in the *Epigrams* and *Silvae*. These objects are indicative of the social taste of the late first century CE. Various statuettes, paintings, and other domestic adornments are mentioned in the *Apophoreta* (*Ep.* 14.170–82, 209, 211), as

they are in the rest of the *Epigrams* (e.g. 4.39, 6.13, 7.15, 7.50, 7.84, 8.6, 8.50, 9.23, 9.24, 9.74, 10.32, 10.87). Both Martial (*Ep.* 9.43, 9.44) and Statius (*Silv.* 4.6) comment upon a bronze statuette of Hercules acquired by their patron Novius Vindex, a connoisseur of fine art. (Martial's poems on the statuette were probably composed a couple of years after Statius published *Silv.* 4.6.) Martial describes the statuette (*Ep.* 9.43.1–4) and mentions its sculptor (5–6) and the owners through whose hands it has passed over generations (7–14). The more expansive form of the *Silvae* allows Statius to provide more detail in his description of the dinner setting and the statuette. The description of the dinner underscores that extravagant fare was *not* on the menu (*Silv.* 4.6.5–11), suggesting that Vindex valued his company and had no need for ostentation of this sort. Instead the focus is on friendship, literary conversation, friendly banter (cf. 12–14), and art (cf. 20–2). Statius mentions Vindex's collection of works by Greek masters such as Myron, Praxiteles, Phidias, Polyclitus, and Apelles (25–30), which reflect the taste of the collector (22–4). He then turns to the newly acquired piece, providing an ecphrasis (32–58) and a history of its prior possession by Alexander, Hannibal, and Sulla (59–88), before “informing” the statuette (addressed as “Tyrinthian,” an epithet of Hercules) of its new owner:

... non aula quidem, Tyrinthie, nec te
regius ambit honos, sed casta ignaraque culpae
mens domini, cui prisca fides coeptaque perene
foedus amicitiae.

Silv. 4.6.90–93

... no palace, Tyrinthian, or royal honor
surrounds you, but the mind of your master that is pure and
blameless of fault; he shows old-style loyalty and friendship,
which once begun remains a perpetual bond.

Vindex's character and moral values are cleverly associated with qualities of the Hercules statuette. The style, skill, and lineage evident in the work (cf. 35–56) becomes a reflection of its collector's tranquil lifestyle and literary sophistication (cf. Zeiner 2005, 190–200): *nec bella vides pugnasque feroces/sed chelyn et vittas et amantes carmina laurus* (You see no wars and fierce fighting but lyre and garlands and song-loving laurels, 97–8; cf. 108–9). In associating Vindex's restrained lifestyle and aesthetic sense with the refined qualities and distinguished ownership of the Hercules statuette, Statius both reveals and upholds not only the ethical ideals but also cultural and material values fundamental to the elite class in Flavian Rome.

The *Apophoreta* (“Dinner Gifts,” transmitted as Book 14 of the *Epigrams*), with its descriptions of implements of everyday life, conveys a sense of Roman domestic and aesthetic taste; the *Xenia* (transmitted as Book 13 of the *Epigrams*), with its emphasis upon food, drink, and clothes, specifically reveals much about the culinary and fashion trends of the first century CE (see CHAPTER 19, AESTHETICS OF THE EVERYDAY, section 4). Quotidian implements and food do not feature prominently in Statius' *Silvae* by comparison with Martial's *Epigrams*, but do appear incidentally, as in *Silvae* 4.9, written in hendecasyllabics, a meter associated with jesting. Here Statius likens the sheets of the moldy volume given to him by Grypus to paper used by vendors to wrap olives, incense, pepper or fish (11–13). A little further on Statius sarcastically suggests, rather in the style of Martial, that any number of other gifts might have done just as well, including

yellowed napkins (25), a slimy Sinyphian snail shell (32–3), fetid bacon (34), smelly candles (40), or a dinner “set” (*synthesin*, 44–5). Here Statius reveals a Martial-like knack for punning: he mocks Grypus for being alarmed – *quid horres?* (why do you start?, 44) – by the suggestion of him giving a *synthesis*, which could mean “dinner suit.” Statius promptly clarifies the intended sense of *synthesin* in the next line with the phrase *alborum calicum atque cacaborum* (of white cups and pots, 45), which shows that he was referring to the far less expensive present of a dinner set.

5 Sex and gender

The broad patriarchal views of Roman society are reflected in Martial’s and Statius’ treatment of sex and gender, topics handled with the decorum, or lack thereof, appropriate to their respective genres. While there is no obscenity in Statius’ *Silvae*, Martial deems obscene language suitable, even necessary, for the genre of epigram (cf. *Ep.* 1.35, 11.15); obscene poems comprise a little less than 10% of his extant corpus. It should be noted at once, though, that Martial’s obscene language is rarely pornographic since it does not have the express purpose of inducing sexual arousal in the reader. As Watson and Watson (2003, 45) observe, obscenity in Martial serves two main purposes: it contributes broadly to the everyday coloring of the *Epigrams* and, in specific cases, provides fodder for invective. The obscene elements often seem to arise when Martial expresses his disapproval of oral sex, passive homosexuality, and adultery. Martial adheres to (and exploits) the norms of Roman sexual behavior in mapping out appropriate and inappropriate sexual relations, particularly for upper-class Roman males (including himself). Such men could freely engage in sexual relationships with slaves and prostitutes of both sexes (who might elicit praise if they play their roles as expected; for example, *Ep.* 3.65, 4.7, 11.39). They could also engage in same-sex relationships with males of lower standing, as long as they took the dominant role (cf. 14.205). Under no circumstances, however, was it acceptable for such men to be a passive partner while engaging in same-sexual relations (2.51, 2.61, 2.89, 5.41, 6.50).

A recurring target of Martial’s invective is a certain Zoilus, a freedman and social climber maliciously said to have been a runaway slave (*Ep.* 1.29), who is portrayed as a stingy and unseemly host (3.82), and, finally, ridiculed because of his propensity for oral sex:

sidere percussa est subito tibi, Zoile, lingua,
dum lingis. certe, Zoile, nunc futuis.
Mart. *Ep.* 11.85

Zoilus, your tongue was struck with an abrupt paralysis
while you were licking. Surely, Zoilus, you screw now.

The strong Roman stigma on fellatio – along with Zoilus’ enthusiasm for it – is given more ingenious expression in an earlier epigram that opens with a lofty reference to Domitian’s moral legislation:

sancta ducis summi prohibet censura vetatque
moechari. gaude, Zoile: non futuis.
Mart. *Ep.* 6.91

The sacred censorship of our supreme leader prohibits and forbids
adultery. Be happy, Zoilus, that you don't screw.

The reference here is to Domitian's revival of the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis* which stipulated severe penalties for adultery (see CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, section 5). Though elsewhere praising such efforts to legislate moral reform (for example, 6.2, 6.4, 6.22), Martial here archly points to its futility, at least for the likes of Zoilus, who will remain on the right side of the law not through virtue but because he performs oral sex on men.

At times, Martial's obscene language achieves ingenious and vivid vignettes, as when he enlists the figure of Priapus, god of procreation, who was often represented with a large male organ:

drauci Natta sui vorat pipinnam,
collates cui gallus est Priapus.

Mart. *Ep.* 11.72

Natta devours the little willy of his young athlete,
compared to whom Priapus is a eunuch.

Martial cleverly contrasts *pipinnam* (little willy; Palmer 1982, 892 opts for "teeny peeper," which nicely captures the connection to *pipio*, "baby bird") with *gallus*, meaning "rooster," but *Gallus* is also the term for a priest of Cybele, a eunuch (cf. 2.45, 13.63, 13.64). Here the religious references, both explicit and implicit, serve to enhance the graphic image of Natta performing fellatio on his exceptionally well-endowed boyfriend.

Statius' treatment of sexuality, including male homosexuality, in the *Silvae* is, unsurprisingly, more refined and tactful than Martial's, though the latter was fully capable of delicate treatment when the occasion called for it. The first poem of the second book of the *Silvae* is an *epicedion* composed in memory of the prematurely deceased Glaucias; Martial also treats the theme in a pair of epigrams (6.28, 6.29). Both poets describe the *libertus* Glaucias, who was the *alumnus* of Melior, in a gracious and flattering tone appropriate to the standing of the wealthy Melior. Emphasis is placed not just on Glaucias' physical beauty, but also his personal charm, modesty, and intellectual precocity (*Ep.* 6.28.6–7; *Silv.* 2.1.39–40). Martial delicately describes Glaucias as the *deliciae* (darling, *Ep.* 6.28.3) of Atedius Melior, *domini sancto dignus amore puer* (a boy worthy of his master's pure love, 6.29.2). Less constrained by generic restrictions on length, Statius is able to extend Martial's epigrammatic description of Glaucias' physical attributes and expressions (cf. the similar treatment of Flavius Ursus' boy favorite in *Silv.* 2.6.34–47). He draws attention to his healthy complexion, sparkling eyes, perfectly formed brow, comely hair, sweetly pleading mouth, lips redolent of spring flowers, tears blended with smiles, mellifluous voice, milk-white throat, and ever-embracing arms (*Silv.* 2.1.41–51). Like Martial, Statius describes Glaucias as Melior's *deliciae*, but also refers to him as *dulces pectore curae* (his heart's sweet care, 71). Statius similarly exceeds Martial in his use of affective language to suggest the intimate nature of the relationship, cruelly cut short by Glaucias' premature death:

inceptas quis ab ore dapes libataque vina
auféret et dulci turbabit cuncta rapina?

quis matutinos abrumpet murmure somnos
 impositus stratis, abitusque morabitur artis
 nexibus atque ipso revocabit ad oscula poste?
 obuius intranti rursus quis in ora manusque
 prosiliet brevibusque umeros circumdabit ulnis?
 Stat. *Silv.* 2.1.60–6

Who will snatch the food from your mouth and wine just
 tasted and so disrupt the whole meal by such an adorable theft?
 Who will lie upon your bedspread, disturb your early morning
 sleep with whispers, delay your departure with his tight
 embraces and call you back from the very door for kisses?
 After you enter again, who will jump to your mouth and
 hands, and hug your shoulders with his little arms?

This description hints at an erotic aspect to the relationship, which is later reinforced by mythological references to Apollo and Hyacinth and also Hercules and Hylas (*Silv.* 2.1.112–13), two homosexual couples (Asso 2010, 683–7, 692–3). Though Melior is unrelated by blood to Glaucias, the suggestion of homoeroticism raises questions about the appropriateness of such a relationship because of Melior's position as a foster father, which was itself somewhat problematic, as Bernstein (2005) notes, because of Glaucias' inferior social standing (he was the natural son of a freedman and freedwoman): most attested adoptive and fostering relationships occurred between individuals of like status. Statius offers erotic undertones but never overtly affirms the sexual nature of the relationship. The question thus remains as to whether in this consolatory poem Melior is mourning the loss of a son or a lover – or both. As Newlands (2012, 183 n. 45) points out, the language used of parental and erotic love in Latin poetry is similar, making it difficult firmly to resolve the issue.

The treatment of women by Martial and Statius generally accords with traditional norms and expectations. While both poets show women in a host of social contexts outside the home, the positive depiction of Roman women is limited largely to their character and talents within the domestic sphere, their roles and identities within their families, and their physical attributes. Women, of course, were subordinate to men and were expected to place the interests of their family, especially their husband, above their own. Martial and Statius both praise women whose behavior conforms to traditional expectations, while Martial censures those women who flout the norms of social and sexual conduct. There is a tension evident in the *Epigrams* between the conduct expected of an elite Roman *matrona* (married woman) and the sexual behavior of Martial's own ideal female type:

qualem, Flacce, velim quaeris nolimve puellam?
 nolo nimis facilem difficilemque nimis.
 illud quod medium est atque inter utrumque probamus:
 nec volo quod cruciat nec volo quod satiat.
 Mart. *Ep.* 1.57

You ask me, Flaccus, what type of girl I want or don't want?
 I don't want one too easy or one too demure.
 I approve of the middle type between the two:
 I don't want one that plays games nor cloyes me.

Elsewhere Martial opts for a similarly middling position on the sexual conduct of his ideal woman (*non tristis torus et tamen pudicus*, a marriage bed not prudish and yet modest, 10.47.10) and on her physique – neither too skinny nor too fat (11.100). More generally, however, the poet juxtaposes seemingly contradictory attitudes toward women with extravagant praise of specific upper-class women. There are a number of poems in the *Epigrams* on the topic of the role or behavior of elite Roman *matronae* (for example, 4.75, 8.12, 10.68, 12.91), who are expected to obey the social code of their class and gender (for the figure of the “sexualized *matrona*” in Flavian literature, see also CHAPTER 16, WOMEN IN FLAVIAN ROME, section 3).

Martial naturally reflects the familiar Roman double standard of male sexual privilege whereby a man committed adultery only by having sex with another man’s wife, while a woman became an adulterer if she has any sexual relationship outside the institution of marriage, including with another woman (cf. *Ep.* 1.90, esp. line 10). Condemnation of Roman women who engage in extramarital erotic activity is a regular theme, and is especially severe in cases involving lower status partners, such as freedmen and slaves (for example, *Ep.* 5.17, 7.14). The sexual profligacy of Marulla, wife of Cinna, is a notorious object of the poet’s scorn:

pater ex Marulla, Cinna, factus es septem
 non liberorum: namque nec tuus quisquam
 nec est amici filiusve vicini,
 sed in grabatis tegetibusque concepti
 materna produnt capitibus suis furta.
 hic qui retorto crine Maurus incedit
 subolem fatetur esse coci Santrae.
 at ille sima nare, turgidis labris
 ipsa est imago Pannychi palaestritae.
 pistoris esse tertium quis ignorat,
 quicumque lippum novit et videt Damam?
 quartus cinaeda fronte, candido vultu
 ex concubino natus est tibi Lygdo:
 percide, si vis, filium: nefas non est.
 hunc vero acuto capite et auribus longis,
 quae sic moventur ut solent asellorum,
 quis morionis filium negat Cyrtae?
 duae sorores, illa nigra et haec rufa,
 Croti choraulae vilicique sunt Carpi.
 iam Niobidarum grex tibi foret plenus
 si spado Coresus Dindymusque non esset.

Mart. *Ep.* 6.39

By Marulla, Cinna, you have been made the father of seven,
 but not of children, for not any of them is yours,
 nor still a son of a friend or of a neighbor.
 But conceived on truckle beds and mats,
 they betray by their heads their mother’s secret loves.
 This one, a Moor, who struts with curly hair,
 affirms he is the progeny of the cook Santra.
 But that one, with flat nostrils and fat lips,
 is the very image of Pannychus the wrestler.

Who does not know that the third is the baker's,
 if he has known and seen heavy-lidded Dama?
 The fourth, with sodomite's forehead and pale face,
 was born to you from your concubine Lygdus.
 Sodomitize, if you want, your son: it's no crime.
 This one with pointed head and long ears
 that move just as donkeys' ears are accustomed to do –
 who denies that he is the son of the cretin Cyrtus?
 Two sisters, that one black and this one red,
 are the flautist Crotus' and the bailiff Carpus'.
 Already your band would be as full as Niobe's,
 if Coresus and Dindymus had not been eunuchs.

Martial characterizes Marulla's adultery, by which she is said to have produced seven illegitimate children, as operating with an appalling (from the conventional Roman perspective) lack of discernment. Her illicit sexual partners are cataloged according to the somatic features of the progeny (for example, *retorto crine*, curly hair; *sima nare, turgidis labris*, flat nostrils and fat lips) accruing from their respective fathers. The cosmopolitan character of Flavian Rome, its broad socio-economic spectrum, and its varied assortment of lower-class professions (cook, baker, bailiff) all find expression in Martial's "genetic" treatment of Marulla's extramarital affairs.

A certain Chloe also comes in for abuse in a fictitious epitaph that plays on the traditional virtues of a Roman *matrona* which Chloe evidently lacks:

inscripsit tumulis septem scelerata virorum
 "se fecisse" Chloe. quid pote simplicius?
 (Mart. *Ep.* 9.15)

Chloe the murderess inscribed on the tombs of her seven husbands
 that "she did it." What could be plainer?

The words *se fecisse* (she did it) ostensibly refer to Chloe's erection of the tombs with the accompanying inscriptions attesting to her wifely devotion, but the phrase also suggests through clever wordplay that she actually murdered them.

Such disparagement is counterbalanced by epigrams lauding elite Roman women who dutifully fulfill their expected social roles. Martial singles out for praise women who show exemplary devotion to their family, especially their husbands, and due deference to their husbands' position as *paterfamilias*. These include Arria, who took her own life out of loyalty to her condemned husband Paetus (*Ep.* 1.13); Porcia, who killed herself after hearing news of her husband Brutus' death (1.42); Nigrina, who handed over her wealth to her husband (4.75); Polla, who commemorated her dead husband Lucan's memory (7.23); Aretulla, who expressed the hope for her brother's return from exile (8.32); and Marcella, who gave Martial an estate near Bilbilis (12.21).

Women feature prominently in a number of the *Silvae* (1.2, 2.7, 3.3, 3.5, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2), with Statius praising conventionally positive attributes, especially *forma* (beauty) and *pietas*. In the epithalamium, mentioned in section 1 of this chapter, in honor of the wealthy aristocrat L. Arruntius Stella and his bride, the wealthy young widow Violentilla.

Stella, the dedicatee of the first book of the *Silvae*, was himself a poet of some renown, having composed, inter alia, elegies on his courtship of Violentilla (see CHAPTER 26, LOST LITERATURE, section 1). Watson (1999) has argued that Statius “whitewashes” the characters of bride and groom, presenting them as “morally impeccable” in order to counter rumors of a premarital sexual relationship that would have been tantamount to adultery. Whether or not that is the case, and notwithstanding the metaliterary playfulness intrinsic to a poem celebrating the marriage of a love poet to his elegiac *domina*, Violentilla is presented by Statius as an ideal Roman bride (cf. Zeiner-Carmichael 2007, 167–74, who argues that Statius makes Violentilla both the virtuous bride of the epithalamium and the strong *domina* of Latin elegy). She receives a great deal of attention, including a remarkable stretch of nearly 100 verses dedicated to her alone (107–201). Statius describes her as “the most beautiful of Italian women” (*pulcherrima forma / Italidum* 272–3), who could have lured even the gods Apollo, Bacchus and Jupiter away from their mates (130–6). Specific physical details are elaborated at length, including her “face fresh in the flower of youth” (*virides ... flore iuventae ... vultus*, 275–6) “snow-white limbs” (*niveos ... artus*, 110–11), “firm breasts” (*stantia ... pectora*, 270–1); many of these qualities suggest fertility, a crucial attribute in elite Roman marriages – and all the more pertinent for a woman not marrying for the first time. Statius praises as well Violentilla’s modest demeanor (12, 162), her good character (122, 164), and her family’s high socio-economic status (108–9, 122–9, 144–58). Even the loyalty of Violentilla to her former husband (138–9, 162, 164–5) brings her credit.

Statius enumerates the qualities of an idealized Roman *matrona* in *Silvae* 2.7 with his praise of Lucan’s widow Polla: *forma*, *simplicitas* (simplicity), *comitas* (graciousness, 85), *census* (wealth), *sanguis* (lineage), *gratia* (charm), and *decor* (elegance, 86). And in *Silvae* 3.5 Statius praises the maternal and wifely virtues of his own wife Claudia:

... tu nosse fidem vitamque maritis
dedere. sic certe cineres umbramque priorem
quaeris adhuc, sic exsequias amplexa canori
coniugis ingentes iterasti pectore planctus
iam mea. nec pietas alia est tibi cura que natae;
sic et mater amas, sic numquam corde recedit
nata tuo, fixamque animi penetralibus imis
nocte dieque tenes.

Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.50–57

... you know how to be faithful and give your life
for your husband. So surely you still seek the ashes and shade
of your former husband; so having clasped the relics of your poet-spouse,
you struck again mighty blows upon your breast when you were
already mine. Not otherwise is your devotion and care for your daughter.
In like manner you love as a mother, so your daughter never is absent
from your heart; you hold her fast in the deepest recesses of your mind
day and night.

Silvae 3.3, a consolation addressed to Claudius Etruscus over the death of his father, shows the increasing importance of the wife’s lineage in contributing to social status in the Flavian period. The long career of Etruscus’ father had seen him rise from slave status

in the reign of Tiberius to become an important imperial freedman and finally to be elevated by Vespasian to equestrian status, a rare honor. Statius represents Etruscus' wife Tettia as an elite *matrona* whose noble lineage compensates for the ancestral void on her husband's side (111–21, esp. 119–20).

Finally, *Silvae* 5.1, an *epicedion*, praises the virtues, conduct, and bearing of Priscilla, wife of Statius' friend Abascantus: *niteret origo* (brilliant lineage [was yours], 53), *felix species* (pleasing appearance, 54), *honos* (dignity, 55), *pudica* (chaste, 62), *fama* (reputation, 63), *simplex hilarisque fides* (simple and cheerful loyalty, 65), *mixta pudori / gratia* (charm mixed with modesty, 65–6), *tibi cura tori* (care for your marriage, 70), *pro coniuge pallor* (your anxiety for your spouse), *tua vota marito* (your vows for your husband, 70), *supplex* (a suppliant [for your husband], 73), *quies* (tranquility), *probitas* (goodness, 117, 154), *moresque modesti* (modest manners, 118), *eximium ... decorem* (peerless beauty, 150), *casta fides* (chaste loyalty, 154), and *numina ... culta deum* (worship of the gods' divinity, 154–5). While delineating these qualities, Statius interweaves actual and hypothetical instances of Priscilla's selfless marital *pietas*, including her rejection of any potential suitors in the fashion of Penelope (58); her repudiation of riches in exchange for her chastity (60–3); her willingness to confront armed troops, lightning bolts, and perils of the sea (66–9) *pro coniuge* (for her husband, 67); her moderation of her husband's work, eating, and drinking habits (119–22); her willingness to share the rigors and dangers of a military campaign with him at the far edges of the empire (127–34); and her attempts to comfort her husband as she lay dying (177–93). While acknowledging that Priscilla was previously married (45–6), Statius portrays her both as a virgin *nupta* (bride; cf. *ceu virginitate*, as though a virgin bride, 46) and as a *univira* (once-married woman; cf. 55–5), which adds further to her credentials as a model Roman wife. Priscilla's character and moral qualities as enumerated in *Silvae* 5.1 generate an idealized feminine image, and one that ultimately enhances Abascantus' own status as an elite Roman *vir*.

6 Memorializing death and idealizing life

Romans not only memorialized death but also idealized the more agreeable aspects of life and commemorated its major events. Both Martial and Statius show a sensitivity to the loss and suffering caused by the death of beloved family members and close friends. There seems little evidence on the whole that either poet was *overly* sensitive to the criticism that the expression of grief, especially by males, was unseemly (cf. Sen. *Ep.* 63, 93; *Dial.* 6, 11, 12), even though both poets allude to the idea (*Ep.* 5.37.18–22; *Silv.* 5.5.56–7). While Martial's mordant wit is evident in a few poetic memorials composed in the form of an epitaph (for example, *Ep.* 1.114, 9.15, 10.61), many more epigrams express sincere condolence for deaths among the elite (1.116, 7.40, 10.71) and lower classes (for example, 6.28, 7.96) – and even a dog (11.69). Also evincing sensitivity and compassion are epigrams expressing wishes or gratitude for recovery from illness (for example, 7.47), as well as those concerning birthdays (7.21–3, 9.52–3, 10.23–4) and friendship (1.39, 1.54, 9.84, 10.44, 11.44).

Although Martial's poetry manifests scant tolerance for the impertinence of slaves and ex-slaves alike (for example, *Ep.* 3.82, 11.39, 11.54, 11.58), he more than once

laments the deaths of slaves (1.88, 1.101, 6.29, 11.91). Particularly touching are his expressions of grief in *Epigrams* 5.34, 5.37, and 10.61 over the death of his darling slave child Erotion a few days before her sixth birthday. The first epigram is especially moving and has, along with the third, occasioned praise among commentators for the poet's expression of affection for young children and his generous regard for slaves. The middle epigram, 5.37, has been found more disconcerting: a certain Paetus chides Martial for making such a fuss over a mere slave, whose loss he considers to be trivial in comparison to his own recent loss of a wife who was both noble and rich. "What can be braver than Paetus?" (*quid est nostro fortius potest Paeto?*), Martial replies. "He has inherited twenty million – and yet he goes on living!" (*ducentiens accepit et tamen vivit*, *Ep.* 5.37.23–4). The use of Erotion's death as a vehicle for a joke against Paetus has troubled some readers and critics and even occasioned doubt as to whether the dead slave-child is anything more than a poetic fiction. With Martial one cannot always be sure whether the feelings he expresses are his own or those of a *persona* (or in some cases a combination of both) – or, indeed, whether he is representing fact or fiction.

Statius' consolatory poems express the sense of desolation and loss caused by the death of loved ones. Personal losses are mourned in *Silvae* 5.3 (Statius' father) and 5.5 (his foster son), but more often Statius commemorates the loss of a friend or patron, including Glaucias, the adopted son of Melior (2.1); the father of Claudius Etruscus (3.3); and Priscilla, the wife of Abascantus (5.1). Statius seems particularly intent upon showing that male lamentation was *not* socially inappropriate, as evidenced in Abascantus' effusive display of tears (5.1.16–42, 160–5, 197–204, 247–8), threat of suicide (205–8), and carrying out of elaborate funeral rites (208–221). The social status of the deceased clearly was not a constraint: like Martial, Statius suggests that a slave could be worthy of his master's tears (2.6.8–14, 94–8). In addition, he argues that stronger bonds often develop between foster parents and their adopted children than between parents and their own kindred (*Silv.* 2.1.82–88), as shown by Melior's (2.1.6, 12–3, 23–5, 166–74) and Statius' (5.5.11–13; cf. 21–7, 48–9, 56–8) expressions of grief over the loss of their adopted sons, both slaves freed in infancy (cf. 2.1.76–81, 5.5.73–7; on the importance of the fostering relationship in the *Silvae*, especially 2.1, see Bernstein 2005). It is a curious fact that Statius has no formal lament addressed to a parent over the loss of a biological son or daughter, despite the observation that it is heart-rending for parents to cremate their children (*Silv.* 2.6.2–3; cf. 5.5.18–21), even more so their sons (2.6.3). Elsewhere Statius downplays the lineage of Claudius Etruscus' father (3.3.43–4), a slave who rose to equestrian status (cf. 43–7, 60, 142–5) and whose death his son mourns (6–12, 176–7), and observes that his compensation was a distinguished career in the service of emperors (44–6; cf. 63–105, 138–41). Like Martial (cf. *Ep.* 11.69), Statius even provides sepulchral poems in epigrammatic style (cf. *Silv.* 2 pr. 16–7) on what might be considered trivializing funerary themes such as pieces dedicated to deceased animals (parrot, 2.4; lion, 2.5).

Just as Martial and Statius memorialize death, so they celebrate life. In one of Martial's most frequently cited epigrams, the poet identifies the elements of the ideal life:

vitam quae faciant beatiorem,
iucundissime Martialis, haec sunt:
res non parta labore, sed relictæ;

non ingratus ager, focus perennis;
 lis numquam, toga rara, mens quieta;
 vires ingenuae, salubre corpus;
 prudens simplicitas, pares amici;
 convictus facilis, sine arte mensa;
 nox non ebria, sed soluta curis;
 non tristis torus et tamen pudicus;
 somnus qui faciat breves tenebras:
 quod sis esse velis nihilque malis;
 summum nec metuas diem nec optes.

Mart. *Ep.* 10.47

The things that make life more happy,
 congenial Martial, are these:
 money not earned by labor but inherited;
 land not unproductive, a fire all year round
 no lawsuits, a toga rarely worn, a tranquil mind;
 a free man's strength, a healthy body;
 judicious frankness, compatible friends;
 affable company, a table without the trimmings;
 a night not drunken but free from cares;
 a marriage bed not prudish and yet modest;
 sleep that makes darkness brief.
 Wish to be what you are and prefer nothing more;
 neither fear your last day nor long for it.

Among the elements mentioned by Martial as constituting the ideal life are inherited wealth, social position, productive land, an informal lifestyle, a robust constitution, comfortable friendships, and a compatible wife. In this epigram and others (2.48, 2.90, 10.23), Martial praises the values of human friendship and the pleasures of the simple and tranquil life, which was possible for only a tiny minority of Romans. In the case of Martial, this ideal mode of life would have been possible only with the largesse of a wealthy patron, but this level of support seems to have eluded the poet during his lifetime.

Statius' *Silvae* celebrate major events in life such as marriage (1.2), recovery from illness (1.4), birthday (2.7), departure on a journey (3.2), and the birth of a child (4.8). In commemorating these events, Statius extols the achievements, character, and virtues of his subjects and in the process reveals and promotes the established values and norms of the upper class that were integral to the maintenance of its status and identity. Statius presents his concept of an ideal community when he appeals to his wife Claudia to return with him in retirement to Naples, his birthplace:

quas et mollis hiems et frigida temperat aestas,
 quas imbelle fretum torpentibus alluit undis.
 pax secure locis et desidis otia vitae
 et numquam turbata quies somnique peracti.
 nulla foro rabies aut strictae in iurgia leges:
 morum iura viris, solum et sine fascibus aequuum.

Stat. *Silv.* 3.5.83–8

A mild winter and cool summer temper this abode;
 the languorous waves of a peaceful sea lap at its shore.
 An untroubled peace exists in the region and the leisure
 of a tranquil life; the quiet and sleep are never disturbed.
 No rage prevails in the Forum or laws unsheathed in dispute,
 just established rights of men and justice without the fasces.

The agreeable climate, tranquility, and *otium* (83–6) that can be enjoyed in Naples are in marked contrast to the civil and political unrest of Rome, embodied in the madness of the Forum and brawling unrestrained by law (87). This violent image of Rome reinforces the militaristic and chaotic description of the city earlier in the poem where reference is made to *rabidi ... proelia Circi* (the battles of the insane Circus, 15) and *clamosi turba theatri* (the throng of the raucous theater, 16). By contrast the temperate climate (83), architectural splendor (89–91), cultural attractions (92–4), and idyllic countryside (95–104) of Naples are matched by the judicious conduct of its citizens (88).

Conclusion

Both Martial and Statius are products of the Flavian age. In their hands epigram and occasional poetry are genres of daily life and social relevance. Both the *Epigrams* and the *Silvae* convey Roman social values through the glimpses and associated judgments they provide of Roman society in the form of occupations, cultural activities, aesthetic tastes, status, lineage, character, and traditional virtues. Martial uses epigram as a tool of double-edged wit and humor to expose the foibles and hypocrisy of Flavian society, whereas Statius uses the *Silvae* to offer praise of his patrons while describing inter alia the places of leisure they enjoyed in their homes and the artworks that filled them.

The irreverence of Martial's epigrams may strike a more responsive chord among modern readers than the aesthetic sensibilities and personal sentiments conveyed in Statius' *Silvae*. In the case of Martial we are left ultimately with a vivid impression of a brash yet engaging poet (or poetic persona) whose experience of life, insight into humanity, and ambivalence toward Roman society are reflected in a host of serio-humorous observations. Where Martial pokes fun at his subjects, mocks his world, and criticizes the fallibility of imperial institutions, Statius adopts a more reverential tone toward his characters and the elite social universe in which they circulate. Despite their dramatically different approaches, both poets compel us to think about Roman life and values.¹

NOTE

- 1 I express my heartfelt thanks to Carole Newlands, John Garthwaite, and Kyle Gervais for reading and commenting upon an earlier draft and especially to Andrew Zissos for his careful and astute editing of the final submitted version.

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FURTHER READING

For short introductions to Martial and Statius, see Dominik 1999 and Newmyer 1999. For a book-length study of Martial dealing with the themes of the epigrams, see especially Sullivan 1991; more recently the monograph of Spisak 2007 discusses Martial as a social guide or conscience in Roman society. Books on Statius' *Silvae* dealing with the themes of and values inherent in the *Silvae* are those of Newlands 2002 and Zeiner 2005. Fitzgerald 2007 and Rimmell 2008 discuss Martial and his world in their monographs, while Newlands 2012 provides an overview of Statius, including his reception.

CHAPTER 24

Latin Prose Literature: Author and Authority in the Prefaces of Pliny and Quintilian

Paul Roche

Introduction

This chapter will consider the author's self-representation in the prefaces of two monumental prose works that have survived from the Flavian period, Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* and Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*. The first work is an encyclopedic repository of facts, knowledge, and information treating virtually all aspects of the natural world and human endeavors; it comprised 37 books and was dedicated to Titus in the year 77 (*NH* pr. 3 *tu sexiesque consul*, you, six times a consul) with whom Pliny was on intimate terms and whose father, the emperor Vespasian, Pliny served as friend, equestrian magistrate, and courtier. The second work is an educational treatise in 12 books on the training of the orator, beginning in the orator's infancy and progressing to his mature career; it was dedicated to Quintilian's friend Marcus Vitorius Marcellus before the death of Domitian on Sept. 18, 96, and most likely also before the death of Flavius Clemens, which occurred after May 1, 95, to whose children Quintilian was tutor (Vidman 1982, 45; Jones 1996, 121; for Quintilian's career and views on education, see CHAPTER 17, EDUCATION IN THE FLAVIAN AGE, section 1). In this chapter, I will examine some of the strategies by which Pliny and Quintilian orchestrate the reader's first impressions, both of their works, as well as their political, social, and literary authority and status. I am particularly interested in each author's constructed position relative to the center of contemporary power, claims made for the public use of their work, reflections of contemporary policy and public events in the construction of the author's identity, and strategies of asserting the author's pre-eminent literary authority.

In the dedicatory preface the author stands on the threshold of his own work, in a space between its production and its reception. There he inducts his audience into the contexts relevant for shaping the reader's reception of the text and creates conditions for

its positive reflection upon his own reputation (Pagán 2010, 194–5; Johannsen 2006, 381–2). Postures of self-depreciation are conventional features of the ancient preface (Pagán 2010, 196: “almost too routine to be meaningful”). These are naturally present in both our texts. In a long central section of Pliny’s preface (*NH* pr. 6–15) he doubts the worth of his own work, details his anxiety regarding Titus’ opinion of it (pr. 6–11), refers to it as not admitting of talent and to his own personal store of *ingenium* (intellect) as *mediocre* (middling, pr. 12); he characterizes his material as sterile, of the lowest station and requiring a vocabulary so removed from formal Latin as to require an apology (pr. 13). Likewise, Quintilian’s modesty is on display at a variety of moments in his preface. He doubts his work is ready for publication (*Ep. Tryph.* 1); he long resisted undertaking it (*Inst.* 1 pr. 1); he would have preferred to decline the request to begin it (1 pr. 2); he lacked confidence in his ability to complete it (1 pr. 3). We should not be deceived. The preface is by design and definition a powerful locus of positive, public self-fashioning, and one that is intimately invested in establishing various types of authority for its author. Though a dedication operates under the pretence of communication between two individuals, the wider audience of readers is always present and their understanding of this initial exchange between author and dedicatee is carefully engineered.

1 On being inside

The *Natural History* is dedicated to Titus in a sustained performance of court interiority. The prefatory epistle moves fluidly between the fiction of familiar and private communication between intimate acquaintances and its status as a public address to Vespasian’s heir. The preface locates itself variously along this spectrum as it defines itself as a *licentior epistula* (a somewhat presumptuous letter, pr. 1), a *nuncupatio* (a formal declaration, pr. 8) and as a *condicio ... nominatim tibi dicantium* (a [formal] proposal of dedicating it to you by name, pr. 6). Markers of the personal and intimate familiarity that characterize the relationship of Pliny and Titus cluster at the beginning of the preface and might best be represented in the first address to Titus as *iucundissime imperator* (most delightful emperor, pr. 1). This is a unique collocation that distils both keynote messages of Pliny’s preface: his intimate enjoyment of Titus’ agreeable company and Titus’ military reputation, through which Pliny could also lay claim to a personal connection (see Ash 2011, 1–5). It is the more remarkable by comparison with the epistolary convention whereby *iucundissime* is regularly conjoined with the personal pronoun (for example, *mi iucundissime Cicero*, Dolabella at *Cic. Fam.* 9.9.3): here it sits jarringly alongside an imperial title and military salutation (*TLL* vii/2.593.31–40). *Iucundissime* as an imperial epistolary formula is found later in the correspondence of Marcus Aurelius and Fronto, but there it is always reserved for Fronto and never used of the emperor. Pliny imports something of the easy familiarity of the world of Catullus and his friends (cf., for example, *Cat.* 14.2, 50.16), to whom the reader is quite explicitly cued (see section 4 of this chapter), into his initial address to Titus, who in 77 – as Pliny himself is later careful to itemize for the reader (pr. 3) – had triumphed, had been censor, had been consul six times, possessed tribunician power (and had done so for seven years) and was sole praetorian prefect. Pliny moreover performs for the reader an assumption of shared inside knowledge regarding the *castrense verbum* (military term), *conterraneus* (fellow-countryman,” pr. 1), which

draws attention to their shared military service. He playfully refers to his own *petulantia* (effrontery, pr. 2) and alludes to other similarly importunate letters he had written Titus (pr. 2). He makes mention of shared military service (pr. 3); and showcases his own knowledge and experience of Titus' qualities as *privatus* (as at pr. 3). We might also note the generally ludic tone of much of the dedication, with its opening pun on *praefatio* (*sit enim haec tui praefatio* (let this be your title), pr. 1).

On the other hand, however, Pliny continually draws his reader's attention back to the reverence and awe with which Titus is generally, and ought to be, approached as emperor. Perhaps the most explicit statement on this theme is the following:

te quidem in excelsissimo generis humani fastigio positum, summa eloquentia, summa eruditione praeditum, religiose adiri etiam a salutantibus scio ...

Plin. *NH* pr. 11

I know that you yourself, having been located on the highest summit of the human race and blest with unsurpassable eloquence and learning are approached with awe even by those making a salutation ...

This passage then quickly develops the image of Titus as a god before whom rustics make offerings. Further examples which likewise draw attention to Titus' station proliferate. We have seen above that he enumerates Titus' imperial offices and distinctions; at 4 he refers to Titus' magnitude and his intimidating rods of office; and at 33 he concludes the preface with the notion that in the public interest he ought not to take up too much of Titus' time. Pliny's own privileged position in relation to Titus, however, is carefully defined by, demarcated from, and rendered unique by his descriptions of the normal collective approach to the emperor: *cum ceteris in veneratione tui pateant omnia alia, nobis ad colendum te familiaris audacia sola superest* (since all other methods of paying you reverence are open to everybody else, to me is left only the presumption of treating you with more intimate respect, *NH* pr. 4).

By contrast, the *Institutio Oratoria* commences with a more muted sense of its author's position relative to the center of political power; and Quintilian does not directly mention the emperor at all. Quintilian's reference to the timeframe of his professional service – *studiis meis ... quae per viginti annos erudiendis iuvenibus impenderam* (for my studies, which I have devoted to the education of the young for 20 years, *Inst.* 1 pr. 1) – certainly demarcates his tenure of a prestigious state-salaried position as a teacher of rhetoric: one of a cluster of positions funded by Vespasian and paying an annual salary of 100 000 *sestertii* (see CHAPTER 17, EDUCATION IN THE FLAVIAN AGE, section 1). Quintilian was among the first (perhaps *the* first) to hold the position at Rome. But here he makes nothing of this or of his considerable connections to the Flavian family (on which see McDermott and Orentzel 1979, 12–3).

On the contrary, the dominant image of the author at the outset of the *Institutio Oratoria* is of a venerated authority in a primarily social context. He is beset by the requests and well-intentioned honors of loving friends: *quidem familiariter postularent* (certain people asked me as friends, *Inst.* 1 pr. 1); *boni iuvenes sed nimium amantes mei* (good young men, but too affectionate towards me, 1 pr. 7). He is motivated by affection: he increased his labors *ut pleniore obsequio demererer amantissimos mei* (so that I might

more fulsomely oblige those most loving of me, 1 pr. 3); and the work in its entirety is devoted to Marcellus because he is *dignissimum hoc mutuae inter nos caritatis pignore* (most worthy of this pledge of our mutual affection, 1 pr. 6).

It is not until the preface to the fourth book that Quintilian positions himself vis-à-vis the emperor in specific terms. In contrast to the easy familiarity of Pliny, here the favor of Domitian is marked as a cause for greater diligence on the part of the author and greater anxiety regarding the work's reception (*Inst.* 4 pr. 1). Quintilian makes what is essentially a public apology for not invoking Domitian in the manner of a god at the outset of the work (4 pr. 5). What was framed in the preface to the first book as a pledge of deep but essentially personal affection and a tool for the education of Marcellus' son is now transformed by imperial benefaction:

cum vero mihi Domitianus Augustus sororis suae nepotum delegaverit curam, non satis honorem iudiciorum caelestium intellegam nisi ex hoc oneris quoque magnitudinem metiar.

Quint. *Inst.* 4 pr. 1

Now, since Domitian Augustus has entrusted the care of his sister's grandchildren to me, I would not appreciate sufficiently the honor of his divine judgment if I did not measure the magnitude of my burden from it.

It may be (if dating permits) that Quintilian's professed anxiety regarding the public reception of his work was connected to another imperial honor, the consular insignia, awarded to him via the support of Flavius Clemens. This favour drew attention that was far from uniformly positive. A decade later Pliny the Younger (Quintilian's former student), would quote Valerius Licinianus' complaints about a capricious fortune who made senators out of professors; later still Quintilian's promotion was commemorated with resentment in Juvenal's third book of satires (Plin. *Epist.* 4.11.2; Juv. 7.186–98).

2 On being useful

Both authors stress heavily the utility of their works in the public arena and their own personal industry in the service of the public good. Perhaps the most famous quote from the *Natural History* – *vita vigilia est* (life is being awake, *NH* pr. 18) – is both a summation of one of the main agendas within the author's self-representation and a keynote of his carefully preserved legacy in the letters of his adoptive heir (cf. Plin. *Epist.* 3.5). His work, as it is presented to the reader in the preface, is a triumph of public utility over *gratia* (favor):

equidem ita sentio, peculiarem in studiis causam eorum esse, qui difficultatibus victis utilitatem iuvandi praetulerint gratiae placendi.

Plin. *NH* pr. 16

I for my part feel that a special place in learning belongs to those who, having overcome difficulties, have preferred the utility of helping over the favor of pleasing.

When Pliny turns to the nature of the work itself, he offers a catalog of industry: 2000 volumes, the majority of which were so obscure as to have never found their way previously into the hands of students; Pliny furthermore restores facts which had fallen into obscurity or had been discovered only by later generations (*NH* pr. 17). And this industry is made all the more astonishing against the backdrop of the author's consuming public responsibilities:

homines enim sumus et occupati officiis subsicivisque temporibus ista curamus, id est nocturnis, ne quis vestrum putet his cessatum horis. dies vobis impendimus, cum somno valetudinem computamus, vel hoc solo praemio contenti, quod, dum ista, ut ait M. Varro, musinamur, pluribus horis vivimus.

Plin. *NH* pr. 18

I am only human, and engaged by my duties and I devote myself to these [literary] concerns in my spare time: that is to say at night, so that no one of your family should think me idle in these hours. We devote our days to you, and we calculate our sleep in accordance with good health, satisfied with this reward alone, that, while (as Marcus Varro says) we deliberate about these things, we are alive for more hours.

Pliny's industry is the very image of the hard-working Italian repeatedly promoted by the Flavian emperors. This ideal was privileged in the census of 73 (Levick 1999, 171–2):

... amplissimos ordines ... purgavit supplevitque recenso senatu et equite, summotis indignissimis et honestissimo quoque Italicorum ac provincialium allecto ...

Suet. *Vesp.* 9.2

... [Vespasian] purged the highest orders ... and supplemented their numbers, when he had reviewed the senate and the knights; he removed the least worthy and enrolled the most honorable of the Italians and the provincials ...

The Flavians more generally presented themselves as patrons of individual industry (cf. for example, Suet. *Vesp.* 17.1 *ingenia et artes vel maxime fovit*, [Vespasian] showed especial favor to talent and acquired skill).

The contemporary nuances of Pliny's industry are most pointedly felt in the comparable routines and self-representations of Vespasian and Pliny. The emperor, Suetonius records, arose before dawn to begin work immediately, by surveying his correspondence and official reports before admitting his friends and getting dressed (Suet. *Vesp.* 21; Millar 1977, 209–10); so too, he was performing his official duties as emperor quite literally until the moment of his death (Suet. *Vesp.* 24). Pliny on the other hand, was among the friends mentioned by Suetonius. As his adopted heir records, Pliny was a model of unremitting toil who would work into the night before rising before dawn to meet with the emperor (Plin. *Epist.* 3.5.9). The final gesture in the preface is likewise one of public utility. Just as Pliny is careful to present his composition as not impinging on his public duty (*NH* pr. 18), the *summarium*, or table of contents, that follows the preface as Book 1 of the opus was supplied in order that consideration of the work's contents might not draw Titus away from his own public duties for too long (*NH* pr. 33; on the *summarium*, see CHAPTER 29, RECEPTION OF FLAVIAN LITERATURE, section 2.1).

The letter to the bookseller Trypho with which the *Institutio Oratoria* begins likewise marks Quintilian as a model of industry and foreshadows the work as being published in the face of overwhelming public interest. Demand for the work is announced from the first word of the letter's text (*Efflagitasti cotidiano convicio*, You have been demanding with daily entreaties, *Ep. Tryph.* 1) and the notion is reprised as the brief letter segues to its conclusion (*sed si tantopere efflagitantur quam tu adfirmas*, but if these are demanded as greatly as you assure me, *Ep. Tryph.* 3). This demand is revisited and re-illustrated in the dedication to Marcellus. The publication of the *Institutio Oratoria* was all the more urgent because two unauthorized works purporting to be books on rhetoric by Quintilian were already circulating Rome. These were, we are assured, inferior products, lectures never intended for publication; but they were released by overly devoted students through a misguided desire to honor their master (*Inst.* 1 pr. 7–8). Quintilian repeatedly stresses the precipitate nature of his release of the *Institutio Oratoria* in the face of this demand: it was not yet mature enough (*Ep. Tryph.* 1); it had not been allowed adequate time to rest in the manner advised by Horace in the *Ars Poetica* (*Ep. Tryph.* 2; Hor. *Ars* 388).

Throughout the prefaces within the work proper, the *Institutio Oratoria* is insistently presented as a work of public service. From its beginning, the subject of oratory is foregrounded as a practical element within the public life of the state: the orator is the man, better than anyone, who can truly act as a citizen in all of his many roles (*Inst.* 1 pr. 10). Accordingly the handbook is a practical benefit. It is dedicated to Marcellus in order to be most useful (*non inutiles*) in the preparation of his son Geta for public life (1 pr. 6). Later he claims that his stimulus to progress the work has been linked by necessity with his position as tutors to the heirs of Domitian (6 pr. 1): his project, his earlier claims for the surpassing public utility of oratory (*qui regere consiliis urbes, fundare legibus, emendare iudiciis possit, non alius sit profecto quam orator*, he who can guide cities by his counsel, give them a firm basis by his laws, and put them right by his judgments, is surely no other than our orator," 1 pr. 10) and his preeminent authority are at once vindicated by his tutelage of future emperors. Quintilian's eldest son had been destined to display his superlative talents in a public career encompassing the highest offices (6 pr. 12); since his death had thwarted his father's hopes, Quintilian presents himself as laboring completely for the public benefit, with any notion of personal benefit completely erased: *in nullum iam proprium usum perseveramus, sed omnis haec cura alienas utilitates, si modo quid utile scribi, spectat* (I persevere for no useful purpose of my own. All this effort is directed to the service of others – if, that is, there is anything serviceable in what I write, 6 pr. 16).

3 Reflecting Flavian Rome

The *Natural History's* prefatory epistle clearly engages with contested elements in the public image of the Flavian dynasty. For instance, Pliny writes that his purpose in addressing Titus with such impudence (*mea petulantia*) in the preface was so that everyone might learn on what equal terms the empire lived with him (*sciantque omnes quam ex aequo tecum vivat imperium*, *NH* pr. 2). He later states of Titus: *nec quicquam in te mutavit fortunae amplitudo, nisi ut prodesse tantundem posses et velles* (nor did fortune's distinction change anything in you at all, except that you are now able to be as beneficial

as you wish to be, pr. 3). Pliny's notion of Titus' egalitarianism and now unrestrained beneficence is quite contrary to Suetonius' own assessment that – due to the arrogance and brutality (*egitque aliquanto incivilius et violentius*, Suet. *Tit.* 6.1) with which Titus had acted as praetorian prefect – there had hardly ever been an emperor entering into office more hated or with such a bad reputation (*Tit.* 6.2). Suetonius' emphasis upon Titus' characteristic benevolence as emperor sits in contrast with this estimate of his reputation in the 70s. Also relevant is the preface's celebration of Titus' *eloquentia*, which Pliny illustrates by way of a model of Flavian family unity: *quanto tu ore patris laudes tonas! quanto fratris famam!* ("with what great eloquence you intone the praises of your father, and the fame of your brother!," Plin. *NH* pr. 5). The harmony of the *gens Flavia* was naturally under close scrutiny in the 70s, and there were a number of incidents and ongoing tensions which found currency in public debate. Titus' loyalty to Vespasian had been an issue of widespread concern in the wake of his capture of Jerusalem in 70 (Suet. *Tit.* 5.2–3 for details). It was no doubt a dead issue by 77; however, it seems that "official" affirmations of Titus' loyalty and family harmony more generally continued long after his return to Rome in June 71. In the period 71–73 there were frequent coin issues at Rome bearing the legend *Concordia* (Harmony; for example, *RIC*² Vesp. 43, 228), and this has been taken to refer, in part, to this uncertainty (Jones 1984, 58; on *Concordia* legends more broadly, see CHAPTER 1, SOURCES AND EVIDENCE, section 3). When, as emperor, Titus revisited his Judean achievements on an arch in the Circus Maximus, the heavy emphasis in the dedicatory inscription laid upon his father's superior authority may also be read as a lingering vestige of this earlier concern: *quod praeceptis patr[is] consiliisq[ue] et auspiciis gentem Iudaeorum domuit* (because, following the directions and plans and under the auspices of his father, he subjugated the race of the Jews, *ILS* 264; cf. Jones 1984, 58).

Although the tension between Titus and Domitian seems to have reached a new pitch after the death of Vespasian (Suet. *Dom.* 2.3), the harmony of the brothers, or lack thereof, was an issue during Vespasian's principate. Pliny's comments regarding his brother's *fama* (reputation) thus have considerable contemporary relevance. The rumors of Titus' affair with Domitian's wife cannot confidently be dated prior to 77, but may have been current. The alleged affair must obviously lie after Domitian's marriage (after December 69 and perhaps late 70; cf. Jones 1996, 18) and before the death of Titus on September 13, 81. Scholars are rightly skeptical regarding the substance of the rumor (for example, Vinson 1989, 440) but our concern is the rumor itself. Domitian's envy of his brother's military reputation was noted from the beginning of the decade and the sole motive Suetonius ascribed to his orchestration of an abortive military operation in Gaul and Germany in Vespasian's absence was to match the *dignitas* (dignity) of Titus (Suet. *Dom.* 2.1). Clearly, Domitian's behavior was a problem for the other Flavians in the early 70s. A story had been circulated that, in Alexandria in 70, Titus counseled Vespasian not to be angry with Domitian, and that Vespasian was only partially mollified: *Vespasianus haud aequè Domitiano mitigatus quam Titi pietate gaudens* (Vespasian, not so much reconciled to Domitian as rejoicing in the loyalty of Titus, Tac. *Hist.* 4.52). Later, Domitian's overly energetic administration at Rome in Vespasian's absence drew a famously withering response from his father, who expressed surprise that Domitian had not also sent him a successor (Suet. *Dom.* 1.3; Cass. Dio 66.2.2–3). Domitian's over-reaching and paternal displeasure thereof also became a theme in various anecdotes

concerning Vespasian's return to Rome (Cass. Dio 66.3.4, 9.3, 10.1). So too, Domitian's sole ordinary consulship of the 70s (in 73) might have been presented as the natural result of his father and brother's censorship of the same year, but Suetonius reports that it was Titus who ceded the honor to his brother (Suet. *Dom.* 2.1). In sum, Pliny's references to Domitian need not be taken as countering any specific tension in the relationship, but his brief vignette of Titus the orator praising his father and brother with equal eloquence and emphasis, and even imitating his brother's poetic endeavors is very much in step with the insistent Flavian emphasis on familial harmony in the wake of 69.

By comparison, and perhaps more naturally stemming from a dedication to a patron who was not a part of the imperial family, Quintilian's dedication to Marcellus engages less directly with specific moments from contemporary political culture (for the wider issue of Quintilian's political position, see for example, Roche 2009, 367–85). An exception emerges in his positioning of the orator in opposition to the philosopher (*Inst.* 1 pr. 9–20), which takes on a sharper edge in the following statement:

... nostris vero temporibus sub hoc nomine maxima in plerisque vitia latuerunt. non enim virtute ac studiis ut haberentur philosophi laborabant, sed vultum et tristitiam et dissentientem a ceteris habitum pessimis moribus praetendebant.

Quint. *Inst.* 1. pr. 15

... but in our own times, the worst vices lay concealed under this name [sc. philosophy] in the majority of cases. For they were not exerting themselves by virtue and by learning that they be regarded as philosophers, instead they were offering a stern look on their face and clothing differing from the rest of society as a pretext for their own dreadful immorality.

A *senatus consultum* (senatorial edict) had been issued expelling philosophers from Rome and Italy, probably in the year 93 (Tac. *Ag.* 2.2; Plin. *Epist.* 3.11.1; Suet. *Dom.* 10.3; Gell. *NA* 15.11.4; Cass. Dio 67.13.3). Quintilian's comments, reprised at 12.3.12, are, then, significant in their timing, even if the generalizing terms of his attack – particularly the notion that the outward appearance of the philosopher is assumed as a cover for moral vice (see for example, Sullivan 1991, 190) – are part of the standard repertoire of invective against philosophers (for example, Mart. 1.24, 9.27, 9.48; Juv. 2.4–13; cf. Moreno Soldevila 2006, 373–8). It is important to differentiate the target of Quintilian's invective from the notion of a “Stoic opposition” to Domitian (see Austin 1948, xvi; Jones 1992, 119–24). But the contemporary relevance of Quintilian's attack is both made explicit in the phrase *nostris vero temporibus* (in our own times), and marked by making personal (indeed *ad hominem*), in the near aftermath of their expulsion from Italy, an opposition between rhetoric and philosophy which had been more regularly cast in terms of opposing disciplines and their exponents rather than the characters and moral standing of those professing to follow them (Wisse 2002, 361–4).

4 The author as literary authority

The dedicatory preface is a place where ostensible self-effacement frequently sits in tension with the author's desire to assert the possession of appropriate literary credentials and authority. Certainly, Pliny's literary authority is very much on display to Titus and to

his wider readership from the beginning of the preface to the *Natural History*. His first descriptive definition of his work, as a *novicium Camenis Quiritium tuorum opus* (a new work for the *Camēnae* of your own *Quirites*, *NH* pr. 1) foreshadows an assertion of generic primacy which Pliny will make in greater detail (see later in this chapter) in a mode familiar from the Augustan poets. Pliny at the same time varies the manner of such claims by avoiding a version of the adjective *primus* (as at, for example, Virg. *G.* 3.10, 12; Prop. 3.1.3; here suggested by *novicium*), and by not casting his primacy as an accommodation of a Greek genre to an Italian setting (Thomas 1988, 39–40). *Camēnis Quiritium tuorum* insists upon the native status of the *Camēnae* in a literary context where the distinction preserved by Ennius (*Ann.* 487 Sk.) was liable, deliberately or otherwise, to be confounded (cf. Hor. *C.* 4.9.5–8 with Ross 1975, 148).

Pliny immediately follows by editing Catullus' opening dedicatory poem. He quotes the Catullan lines *namque tu solebas | meas esse aliquid putare nugas* (for you were accustomed to regard my *nugae* [trifles] as something worthwhile, Cat. 1.3) but transposes the order of the words to read *namque tu solebas | nugas esse aliquid meas putare* which retains the same meaning but, Pliny claims, gives the line a smoother feel (*ut obiter emolliam Catullum*, so that I might in passing make Catullus more delicate, *NH* pr. 1). At issue is the iambic rhythm of *meas* (short–long) in the first foot of the hendecasyllable; in the imperial period this had fallen out of fashion. Pliny thus picks up at once the function of the first Catullan poem *qua* dedicatory epistle; he engages competitively with the programmatic emphasis there on polish (*lepidum novum libellum | arido modo pumice expolitum*, a charming new little book, just now polished with dry pumice, Cat. 1.1–2); and he evokes a key word of Catullan literary self-definition (16.3–4 on his *uersiculi molliculi*, cf. Pliny's *ut ... emolliam*; see more generally *TLL* viii.1376.80–77.10). His reasoning for making the transposition shows Pliny to be finely attuned to the subtle distinctions of Hellenistic/neoteric poetic register:

... ille enim, ut scis, permutatis prioribus syllabis duriusculum se fecit quam volebat existimari
a Veraniolis suis et Fabullis ...

Plin. *NH* pr. 1

... for he, as you know, by the changing of these early syllables made himself slightly harsher than he wished to be esteemed by his dear Veraniuses and Fabulluses ...

More finely tuned than Catullus in fact. Pliny moreover marks his credentials with the coinage, *duriusculum* (slightly harsher), which showcases his sensitivity to Catullan style and predilection (see for example, Fordyce 1961, 95–6 on diminutives) and utilizes another key term from the vocabulary of poetic polemics (Coleman 1999, 51–2). It is a *tour de force* of literary posturing which was not lost on his adoptive heir, who would commemorate it 20 years later by deploying his uncle's coinage, *duriusculus* – the only other passage in extant Latin in which it is used – in the context of Pompeius Saturninus' (neo-)neoteric compositions: *inserit sane, sed data opera, mollibus levibusque duriusculos quosdam; et hoc quasi Catullus aut Calvus* (he includes some slightly harsher verses among the smooth and the light, but this is on purpose, and in the style of Catullus or Calvus, Plin. *Epist.* 1.16.5; see further Gibson 2011, 189–92).

When Pliny playfully alludes to Titus' too-discerning attention as dedicatee of the *Natural History* (pr. 7–11), we observe many of the same keynotes sounded from the opening of the preface. There is the same lightly worn erudition, encompassing forensic procedure (7 on the legal *reiectio*, or “process of challenging,” which Pliny “teaches” to Titus); apposite historical *exempla* (9 on Cato; 10 on Scipio Asiaticus); the origins of celebrated *bons mots* (9); and legal etiology (10 on the *provocation* (appeal)). Above all, it is to be observed in the same dexterous control of literary register and history, wherein Pliny cites Cicero's use of Lucilius and – in making a claim for Lucilius' status as originator of verse satire in the mode of Horace (*Sat.* 2.1.62–4; Morgan 1992, 281) – gives what appears to be a technical term of criticism from satire: *qui primus condidit stili nasum* (who first founded the nose of style, *NH* pr. 7; see Morgan 1992, 279–82 for discussion of this vexed phrase); compare perhaps Lucil. 942–3 *W nasum deductius | quam pandius* (a nose more attenuated than spreading”; and certainly, in reference to Horace as satirist, Pers. 1.118 *callidus excusso populum suspendere naso* (clever at dangling the public from his blown nose). Ultimately, it is Titus' station at the loftiest pinnacle of human achievement and his possession of the ultimate eloquence and learning that guarantees for the reader the correlative worth of Pliny's literary offering: *curant, quae tibi dicantur ut digna sint* (they take care that what is dedicated to you is worthy of you, *NH* pr. 11).

When Pliny defines his work, it is frequently in the terms and imagery familiar from the learned Hellenistic poets and their Roman successors. His image of his literary dedication as a rustic offering to a deity (*NH* pr. 11) evokes at once the emperor's majesty and the learned poet's pretence of being a *sacerdos* (priest) making offertory in the form of his *libellus* (little book, as at e.g. Virg. *G.* 2.476; Prop. 3.1.1–4; cf. Pers. *prol.* 6–7; and see Hunter 2006, 7–8). Likewise, he remarkably refers to an encyclopedic work of 36 volumes as *levioris operae hos ... libellos* (these slender booklets of a lighter nature, *NH* pr. 12; cf. Hinds 1987, 22, 141 n. 58). Most explicitly, he makes a claim to generic primacy which encompasses both Greek and Latin literature:

iter est non trita auctoribus via nec qua peregrinari animus expetat. nemo apud nos qui idem temptaverit, nemo apud Graecos qui unus omnia ea tractaverit.

Plin. *NH* pr. 14

The path is not a road worn down by authors nor one on which the mind seeks to travel. There is no one among us who has attempted the same, and no one among the Greeks who has single-handedly treated all of these things.

The image is most familiar from the prologue to Callimachus' *Actia*, and Apollo's injunction to the poet not to travel on well-worn roads, but to favor unworn roads and narrower paths (*Aet.* fr. 1.25; Welch 2005; 160–2). As Pliny develops this description of his work, the whole enterprise is conceived of as a monument to dutiful labor and to difficulties overcome: the *Natural History* is not a *studiorum amoenitas* (delightful field of study), nor – unlike the works of other authors – will it get bogged down in the obscurity of endless subtleties (*NH* pr. 14): both topics evoke his stance of public utility as much as literary care. The final definition of the work in the preface unites Pliny's rejection of the hackneyed theme (cf. esp. Callim. *Ep.* 27.4 *συχκαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια*, I hate

everything common; Virg. *G.* 3.4 *omnia iam vulgata*, everything is now made common) with the difficulty of the task he has completed:

ante omnia attingenda quae Graeci τῆς ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας vocant, et tamen ignota aut incerta ingeniis facta; alia vero ita multis prodita, ut in fastidium sint adducta. res ardua vetustis novitatem dare, novis auctoritatem, obsoletis nitorem, obscuris lucem, fastiditis gratiam, dubiis fidem, omnibus vero naturam et naturae sua omnia.

Plin. *NH* pr. 14–15

Deserving to be treated before all things are those things which the Greeks call “an all round education.” Yet these are either unknown, or made obscure by ingeniousness; or yet have been published by so many as to attract scornful contempt. It is a difficult task to give novelty to old matters, authority for the novel, splendor to the commonplace, light to the shadowy, charm to what is scorned, credibility to the doubtful, and finally nature to all things and all her properties to nature.

Pliny’s general strategies of asserting his literary credentials also emerge through his polemical stance against his contemporaries and predecessors. He frames literary succession as a battle. In the context of his completed but withheld history of his own times he writes *occupantibus locum faveo, ego vero et posteris, quos scio nobiscum decertaturos, sicut ipsi fecimus cum prioribus* (I favor those who are seizing my place, and indeed I also favor succeeding authors, who I know will battle it out with us, just as we ourselves do with our predecessors, *NH* pr. 20); later he attributes Virgil’s reception of Homer as based on competition (pr. 22). The very fact of a completed but unpublished contemporary history is a side shot at his peers. It is evidence, he writes, that there is nothing for him (that is, in contrast to common practice) to be gained in his publishing a laudatory account of the Flavians (pr. 20); it is also, clearly, a public declaration that the history he wrote *was* complimentary. This polemical stance had already been on display in the preface in his criticism of authors who were indulging themselves in their topics or were too bogged down in erudite details to be accessible (pr. 14). It is felt again in his criticism of those authors who do not name their sources: proof, he calls it, of his own antagonism (*argumentum huius stomachi mei*, *NH* pr. 21). His is best practice, he claims, *benignum ... et plenum ingenui pudoris* (well-intentioned and full of natural modesty, *NH* pr. 21), but it is not to be observed in that of his predecessors and contemporaries (pr. 21–3): evidence of their mean spirit and unhappy intellect alike (*obnoxii profecto animi et infelicis ingenii*, *NH* pr. 23). The simple virtue informing the admission of sources extends to the practice of naming of his work, and stands in high contrast to his literary predecessors once again. Greek predecessors offer flashy titles (*inscriptiones apud Graecos mira felicitas*) for works of no real substance; Roman authors, whom Pliny facetiously terms *graviores* (more weighty, pr. 24) by comparison, are denigrated; especially Furius Bibaculus, whose *Lucubrationes* would normally be suggestive of toil by lamplight – such as Pliny claims for himself (*NH* pr. 18) – but are ridiculed as being suggestive of all-night intoxication: *facetissimi Lucubrationum, puto quia Bibaculus erat et vocabatur* (the wittiest title is “*Lucubrationes*,” I think because the author imbibed and was called Bibaculus, pr. 24; cf. Holford-Strevens 2003, 27). The closer contemporary Apion, an imperial *grammaticus* known to Pliny (*NH* pr. 30.99), is scathingly denounced for his own self-serving ambitions of literary immortality (*NH* pr. 25; Damon 2008, 340–4). Pliny by

contrast is proud of his own unadorned and serious title (*NH* pr. 26): a position which quickly segues into favoring the working title and its implications of never-ending improvement—*tamquam inchoata semper arte et imperfecta* (as though [a work of] art was always in process and incomplete, *NH* pr. 26) – and concludes with the *invidia* (envy) which attaches to works with self-consciously finished titles.

The final extended passage of the preface (*NH* pr. 28–32) develops the notion of the work of art being always in progress, by ostensibly admitting the imperfection of his own work: *ego plane meis adici posse multa confiteor, nec his solis, sed et omnibus quos edidi* (“I for my part admit that a great deal could be added to my own writings; not just to these alone, but to everything that I have published,” pr. 28). But there is some slippage here from the notion of the sculptors and painters of pr. 26–7, whose work never reaches that final moment of perfection, to the notion of an encyclopedic researcher, whose published work, however exhaustive and voluminous (pr. 17), could yet be supplemented further by the industry and researches of its author. And the admission is after all a feint to allow Pliny a forward defense against carping critics: *Homeromastiges* (scourges of Homer, a pejorative term for harsh critics) such as the Stoics, dialecticians, and Epicureans who had criticized his previous work on grammar (pr. 28). At the end of the preface, Pliny is like Theophrastus, Cato the Elder, and Plancus: standing secure from the petty quibbling of such *vilitigatores* (captious critics, another pejorative term).

When Quintilian represents himself and his habits as author, the first impression is of speedy publication in the mode familiar from the prefaces to Statius’ *Silvae* (cf. for example, *Silv.* 1 pr. 3; 2 pr. 9). He thought it not ready enough for the public (*ipse eos nondum opinabar satis maturuisse*), a consequence of its swift composition: *componendis ... paulo plus quam biennium tot alioqui negotiis districtus impendi*, “I spent a little bit more than two years on composing them, although I was distracted by so many duties,” *Ep. Tryph* 1). This prefatory emphasis on speedy composition might thus evoke contemporary rhetorical stances of (ostensible) apologetic self-depreciation, wherein speed and fluency stand as virtues of lower genre works in opposition to the lengthy labor characteristic of the higher genres (Newlands 2002, 33, 54). Immediately, however, a second keynote is struck in the immensity of the workload undertaken: *tempus non tam stilo quam inquisitioni operis prope infiniti et legendis auctoribus, qui sunt innumerabiles, datum est* (time was given not so much to the stylus as to the research required for a work of almost infinite scope and to reading the authorities, who are innumerable, *Ep. Tryph* 1). A third key term in the letter to Trypho evokes the polished finish of the work, *diligentia* (attentiveness): Quintilian’s for his own work, since in Horatian vein he had shelved the *Institutio Oratoria* precisely so that, with his own enthusiasm cooled, he might proof it *diligentius* (more attentively), and now Trypho’s as publisher by whose *fides ac diligentia* (loyalty and attention), as accurate a copy as possible will come into the hands of Quintilian’s readership. It is reprised in the preface to Book four, when Domitian’s favor provides him with a *nova insuper ... diligentiae causa* (a fresh additional cause of attention, *Inst.* 4 pr. 1).

Speed is again in tension with perfection in the dedication proper, when Quintilian writes that his work has been hastened in response to unauthorized versions circulating under his name (*Inst.* 1 pr. 7), as mentioned in section 2 of this chapter. Quintilian may have rushed through (*perducere festinabimus*) the *Institutio Oratoria*; there may be some overlap of content with these unauthorized books, with much changed and much added, but the quality of writing will set them apart: *omnia uero compositiora et quantum nos poterimus elaborata* (“the whole thing will be better composed and will be polished as

best as we are able," *Inst.* 1 pr. 8). The existence of these "bootleg" copies incidentally advances his self-constructed image as a widely regarded cultural authority at Rome. They may be read as variations on the common contemporary strategy of advertising forged and plagiarized versions of the author's work in circulation (for example, *Mart.* 1.29, 38, 52, 66, 72) as an index of the author's cultural capital and the esteem with which his work was regarded by his wider community.

Quintilian's literary credentials are most characteristically promoted in the polemical stance he takes towards his predecessors in the genre of rhetorical handbooks, one of whom, incidentally, was Pliny the Elder's *Studiosus*. We see this implicitly in the urging of his friends to guide them through the different and at times contradictory opinions offered in previous manuals on rhetoric (*Inst.* 1 pr. 2). Even in an ostensibly self-effacing passage at the beginning of the first preface, Quintilian thus emerges by broad consent as a superior authority regarding the material of his subject matter (1 pr. 2). This notion soon develops into Quintilian's own original contribution, which transcends the achievement of his predecessors. Again, the imagery is the Callimachean less-travelled path: *ne vulgarem viam ingressus alienis demum vestigiis insisterem* ("lest, travelling a common path I merely tread in others' footsteps," *Inst.* 1 pr. 4; cf. *Callim. Act.* 1.25–8). The vast majority of his predecessors were mistaken or self-serving. They had undertaken their projects either laboring under false assumptions regarding the competence of their own pupils or the value of elementary stages. Worse still, they avoided topics that were insufficiently remunerative for themselves: *nullam ingenii sperantes gratiam circa res etiamsi necessarias, procul tamen ab ostentatione positas* (they had no hope of winning favor for their talents by dealing with subjects which, however necessary, are very far from being showy, *Inst.* 1 pr. 4). This polemical stance and the comparative virtue of Quintilian's own exhaustive treatment gain considerable point by the end of the first preface:

Nam plerumque nudaе illae artes nimiae subtilitatis adfectatione frangunt atque concidunt quidquid est in oratione generosius, et omnem sucum ingenii bibunt et ossa detegunt, quae ut esse et adstringi nervis suis debent, sic corpore operienda sunt.

Quint. *Inst.* 1 pr. 24

The familiar dry textbooks, with their striving for excessive subtlety, merely weaken and cripple any generous stylistic tendencies there may be, drain off all the juice of the mind and expose the bones, which must of course be there, and be bound together by the proper sinews, but which also need to be covered by the flesh.

Quintilian's own work and his exhaustive control of his material stand in high contrast; once again brevity is in tension with the claims of an immeasurable topic:

Ideoque nos non particulam illam, sicuti plerique, sed quidquid utile ad instituendum oratorem putabamus in hos duodecim libros contulimus, breviter omnia demonstraturi: nam si quantum de quaque re dici potest persequamur, finis operis non reperietur.

Quint. *Inst.* 1 pr. 24

This is why I have not (like most writers) confined myself to this small part of the subject, but have gathered together in these twelve books everything that I think useful for the orator's education. I shall set it all out briefly, for if I were to go into everything that can be said on each subject, the work would have no end.

This critical stance develops throughout the remaining prefaces of the *Institutio Oratoria* (4 pr. 6). At the conclusion of the preface to Book four (4 pr. 7), Quintilian's predecessors feared to adopt his totalizing approach (*velut onus totius corporis veriti*, as though in fear of the whole topic). Each individual topic that others wrote on, sometimes in multiple volumes, Quintilian will treat in one work. His declaration combines the notion of his own daring, expressed in a metaphor of composition familiar in Hellenistic poetry (*ausus contexere*, daring to weave; cf. e.g. Virg. *Ecl.* 10.75; Martindale 2005, 97 n. 102) – appropriate to what is in effect a work of miniaturization of the material treated by his predecessors – with the notion of almost infinite toil familiar from the first preface (*prope infinitum laborem prospicio*). This is now subjoined to both the author's increasing fatigue in the face of his task (*ipsa cogitatione suscepti muneris fatigor*, I am exhausted at the very thought of the task I have begun, *Inst.* 4 pr. 7), and his increasingly heroic sense of endurance in the face of its enormity (4 pr. 7; cf. 12. pr. 1). In the preface to Book eight, Quintilian states that even the most learned of his predecessors misunderstood invention and disposition because of their remoteness from real eloquence (*Inst.* 8 pr. 3). By contrast, the skilled instructor – implicitly Quintilian – will select the best material from his authorities and teach what he believes to be correct. This is a model which accords perfectly with Quintilian's own description in the first preface of his friends' request that he guide them through the contradictory advice offered in previous handbooks (*Inst.* 1 pr. 2). He sees the simplicity that eluded his predecessors in their sophistry: *sunt autem neque obscura neque ad percipiendum difficilia, quae scriptores diversis opinionibus pertinaciter tuendis involuerunt* (The things which writers have made so complicated by obstinate defenses of their own diverse opinions are really neither obscure nor hard to grasp, *Inst.* 8 pr. 4). He returns in Book eight to the escalating difficulty of the work: now the subject matter, by common consent, is the most difficult part of the whole work (*Inst.* 8 pr. 13). In the preface to the final book, he once again describes the contents of the upcoming book as the most difficult of the entire project (*partem operis destinati longe gravissimam*, *Inst.* 12 pr. 1; cf. 12 pr. 2).

Quintilian's final description of the process of writing the *Institutio Oratoria* is a sustained metaphor of himself as a sailor, proceeding further and further out to sea and accompanied by an ever-depleting retinue of friends in the form of previous authorities on the topic (*Inst.* 12 pr. 2–4). By the time he has reached the content of the final book, the author is left in the company of one supreme authority before transcending even the achievement of that man:

nunc “caelum undique et undique pontus.” unum modo in illa immensa vastitate cernere videmur M. Tullium, qui tamen ipse, quamvis tanta atque ita instructa naue hoc mare ingressus, contrahit vela inhihetque remos et de ipso demum genere dicendi quo sit usus perfectus orator satis habet dicere. at nostra temeritas etiam mores ei conabitur dare et adsignabit officia. ita nec antecedentem consequi possumus et longius eundum est ut res feret.

Quint. *Inst.* 12 pr. 4

Now I have “sky all around, and all around deep.” Only one man can I see in all the boundless waste of water, Marcus Tullius, and even he, though he entered this sea with such a great and finely equipped ship, shortens sail and checks his stroke, content to speak merely about the type of style which his ideal orator is to use. But I, in my rashness, will seek to give him [sc. the orator] also moral principles, and assign him duties. Thus I have no predecessor to follow, but must go on and on as the subject leads.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the notion of the dedicatory preface as a carefully orchestrated invitation inwards, addressed to the individual dedicatee and performed for the wider community of readers; but it is of course equally an elaborate projection of the author outwards from the text into his civic community and beyond: a place of speech acts designed to reify the various self-constructing images of their author. In the presence of the imperial family these might, as we have seen, take the form of performed familiarity against the backdrop of normative awe; or conversely might express normative awe in response to the emperor's attention. The author might lay claim to the utility of their works in the public arena, or to the public anticipation of it; or might make a case for literary production as an avenue of public service. Both of our authors stress the immensity of their industry, either as it can be mapped against contemporary ideology, the emperor's personality, or as it takes its place within wider issues of literary polemics. The preface is a place to reflect contemporary debate, about politics and policies; and about literature: its role, usefulness, and ideal modes. It is a place for the author to present his work as groundbreaking and new (and this in an age of self-conscious secondariness); to construct literary histories and to engage with one's predecessors; to showcase sensitivities, erudition, capacity, and energy; to offer, in a word, substance. It is, finally, a place for staking one's claim to literary predominance, for asserting (as at Quint. *Inst.* 12 pr. 2–4, earlier in this chapter) that one has surpassed all predecessors in audacity, control, endurance, and authority.

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FURTHER READING

A valuable collection of essays addressing many aspects of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* as well as the contexts of its production and immediate reception can be found in *Pliny the Elder: Themes and Contexts*, edited by Roy K. Gibson and Ruth Morello (Leiden: Brill). For Quintilian's position vis-à-vis Domitian, see McDermott and Orentzel (1979) and Roche (2009). For a stimulating exploration of the epistolary preface as a vehicle for self-fashioning by Statius and Pliny the Younger, see Pagan (2010); also helpful is the study of Johannsen (2006) on the prose prefaces of Martial and Statius.

CHAPTER 25

Flavian Greek Literature

Adam Kemezis

Introduction

Proper consideration of Greek literature is fundamental to an integrated cultural history of the Roman empire in the Flavian era or any other. Greek was the dominant literary language in half the empire and had a substantial secondary presence in the other half, not least in the city of Rome. In the first century BCE, Cicero had taken it for granted that Greek was a more widely read literary language than Latin (*Pro Archia* 10.23); this was still true 150 years later, if only because Latin speakers paid considerably more attention to Greek literature than Greeks did to Latin. Imperial-era Greek literature is a uniquely rich set of cultural-historical artifacts, giving us as it does the voices both of provincial subjects of Roman imperialism and of influential members of the imperial elite. None of these assertions is especially controversial, and it is no longer necessary, as it was 50 years ago, to justify the very exercise of doing scholarship on Imperial Greek literature. Once these confident generalities are left behind, however, problems of detail present themselves. Even if it is generally agreed that this literature is important, there is not yet a consensus on how it should be conceptualized and incorporated into the broader cultural history mentioned above. This lack of consensus is reflected in the basic assumption of this chapter. Granted that Greek literature was produced in the Flavian period, and granted that imperial Greek literature is important, can one therefore meaningfully and profitably speak of a Flavian Greek literature? In this chapter, I shall be arguing for an affirmative answer to that question, but I cannot pretend that this is self-evidently correct, or that it would be accepted to the same degree by all scholars of the period. In fact, current scholarship on Imperial Greek literature seldom uses Roman dynastic history as a periodizing scheme, the Flavians less so even than other dynasties. Any article with this title has to make some defense of its own premises.

There are several reasons why “Flavian Greek Literature” is not a commonly used interpretive category. The subject matter is unusually intractable due both to a scarcity of materials and to conceptual problems. The scarcity will be dealt with more fully later in this chapter, but suffice it to say that, in contrast to the abundance of Flavian Latin

literature, there is very little surviving Greek literature that can be securely dated to the years from 69 to 96. This chapter will in fact largely be a consideration of only two authors (Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch) with brief reference to a third, Josephus, who is discussed more fully elsewhere in this volume (see CHAPTER 15, FOREIGNERS AND FLAVIANS, section 4 and CHAPTER 27, THE FLAVIAN LEGACY, section 1.3). As much as possible will be gleaned from their fragmentary or lost contemporaries (on whom see also CHAPTER 26, LOST LITERATURE), but there are a great many literary-historical questions that we simply lack the means to answer. The conceptual problems are more complicated. To begin with, there is the standard problem that “Flavian,” as a political category, can serve only imperfectly as a means of structuring literary history. Latinists have a long history with this problem; there are questions that are peculiar to Greek literature, however. They relate to how one understands the cultural status of the Greek-speaking elite that produced literature in the Roman period. If one imagines them as part of an overall imperial ruling class, then it makes sense to periodize their literature in a way analogous to that used for their Latin contemporaries. If, however, one sees them as an ethnically distinct subject people of the empire, then things are quite different. In that event, the ongoing fact of colonial domination is an important determining factor, but the character of an individual ruling dynasty is relatively less significant, since authors do not identify themselves as closely with their rulers. One would not speak of “Victorian” and “Edwardian” periods in the indigenous literatures of Britain’s colonial subjects.

The first of the two views just mentioned tends to be favored by prosopographically oriented historians (for example, Bowersock 1969), while the second appeals both to scholars influenced by postcolonial theory (for example, Swain 1996) and to traditional philologists (Latinists especially) for whom the linguistic divide is a critical cultural determinant. Most work, however, applies the dichotomy less rigidly and places different Greeks at different points along the axis between “integration” and “autonomy.” Almost everyone would agree that the label “Flavian” fits the Latin poet Statius in more numerous and important ways than it does his contemporary Plutarch, the Greek philosopher-biographer. While I will not argue the contrary, I will maintain that “Flavian” can be applied more usefully as an interpretive category than is usually done. This chapter will address three principal questions, each in its own section. The first is that of traditional literary history: What authors and texts do we have, and what generic and formal developments can we see in them? The scope for this kind of analysis is unfortunately very limited given the materials involved, and I will mainly be considering why it is that “Flavian” is *not* a meaningful category for many kinds of literary history. The next two sections will both take a broader cultural-historical view, but each starting from a different point. Section 2 will look at the Flavian emperors and their role in cultural politics. I will examine to what extent our current largely Latin-source-based model of the period, as one of expanding monarchical power leading to conflict with the aristocracy, can be applied to Greek authors. Section 3, by contrast, will begin with current models of Greek cultural history. I will be considering in particular the history of the so-called “Second Sophistic,” a set of literary and cultural phenomena that are usually seen as beginning in the late first century CE and reaching their height in the second. The crucial question here will be whether the start of the Second Sophistic can be seen as in any way a Flavian event, and whether any of the phenomena associated with it can be seen as peculiarly

Flavian. These questions are all the more important in that current scholarship on the Second Sophistic tends to view it as a static phenomenon, and it is my hope that reading Dio and Plutarch in the light of specifically dynastic events can give our understanding an added level of historical dynamism.

1 Defining the corpus

The fortunes of literary survival have dealt very unevenly with Greek literature of the Flavian period. For what classicists typically define as the “mainstream” of Greek literature, that is, works by elite pagan authors from the Mediterranean core, the harvest is poor. There is in fact no major surviving author whose works fall mainly within the Flavian decades. The two figures to whom much of this article will be devoted, Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom, were both born in the 40s and lived well into the reigns of Trajan or even Hadrian. Each man left a large corpus of work, most of which cannot be precisely dated. In both cases, modern consensus assigns the largest portion to the years after 96 (see the next section for a detailed discussion), but two caveats may be invoked. The first is that by no means all of these dating hypotheses are well supported. The second is that both Plutarch and Dio were, by ancient standards, old men in 96. Their worldview, especially in political matters, would have been fully formed under the Flavian emperors, and it may well be that formation that we are seeing in works dated to the reign of Trajan.

Beyond these two figures, the picture is exceedingly vague. Twenty-seven years is a short window, and many genres of Greek literature (technical and medical writing, novels, most verse forms) yield precious little internal evidence on which to build a date. Flavian dates have been suggested for some epigrams in the Greek Anthology (see Cameron 1982) and are not impossible for some of the extant Greek novels (see Bowie 2002). But even if a single passing reference could place a Rufinus or a Chariton in the right time period, their overall content would still not lead one to label them as distinctively Flavian in the way that Martial’s does. Imperial Greek authors in general are less likely than their Latin counterparts to make reference to specific contemporary events, and often prefer to locate their works in the classical past or a timeless setting; the ideological reasons for this are associated with archaizing tendencies of the Second Sophistic, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Our meager and speculative direct evidence can be supplemented indirectly by later Greek and contemporary Latin authors who reflect or comment on the Greek literary scene of the 70s to 90s. The former include the surviving writings attributed to the Stoic philosophers Musonius Rufus and Epictetus; in both cases they have been redacted by students in a later era but represent an idealized version of what those men taught at the time. The letters attributed to the itinerant religious figure Apollonius of Tyana would be a very rich resource if they could be securely authenticated. This remains impossible (Jones 2009 suggests approaches to the question), but they may reflect well-informed traditions about that man’s activities, and certainly give us an idea of how the Flavian era figured in subsequent Greek cultural memory. This last applies also to the major writings of Philostratus, writing in the 220s and 230s, who set most of his *Apollonius* and a portion of his *Sophists* in the Flavian era, and whose observations will be frequently cited in

this chapter. Latin authors such as Quintilian, Martial, Tacitus (especially in the *Dialogus*) and both Plinies have the advantage of being immediate contemporaries, but their comments on Greek literary matters are usually incidental, and skewed towards Rome-based activity. The main points that emerge from Latin sources are, first, that there was an active Greek-language literary scene in Rome, including several names mentioned also in Philostratus, and also authors whose first language was Latin (Mart. *Ep.* 4.23); second, that, while the Latin authors see their own literature as changing and developing, they tend to speak of the Greeks in static terms, without registering any major changes associated with the coming or going of the Flavian dynasty.

In short, we simply do not have the kind of large, securely dated corpus that allows one to observe generic and aesthetic trends. Any attempt to designate a body of Greek works as Flavian and to write traditional literary history on that basis would inevitably regress into circular reasoning and would always be just one unfortunate papyrus find away from utter collapse. It will not be attempted here, beyond to say that in literary terms Plutarch and especially Dio Chrysostom display much of the rhetoricization and the imitative, archaizing aesthetic associated with the mainly second-century works of the Second Sophistic. For further discussion, readers should consult works on that phenomenon (for example, Reardon 1971; Whitmarsh 2001), with the caution that they will find little specifically relating to the Flavian period.

2 Literary reflections of the emperors

The same factors that make Greek literary history in this period so difficult also affect our efforts to gauge the Flavian emperors' direct impact on the Greek world. Nowhere in the corpora of Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch is any of the Flavians explicitly named as a living person. There are several references to them as dead, especially in Dio, and these references are occasionally neutral but most often negative, especially toward Domitian (see Ash 2008 for Plutarch and the relevant portions of Jones 1978 for Dio). This immediately raises the question of how closely these Greek writings correspond to the much fuller picture that emerges from Latin literature. In that field, our surviving sources at first glance suggest a sharp dichotomy between one set of authors (Pliny the Elder, Quintilian, Statius, Silius, etc.) who express adulation of the Flavians while they reigned, only to yield the floor in 96 to other authors (Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Juvenal) who vilify the dead Domitian and claim that his tyranny prevented them from writing (see CHAPTER 1, SOURCES AND EVIDENCE, section 1). Tacitus' *Agricola* eloquently refers to a 15-year space in which political speech was all but abolished (*Agr.* 2–3). This picture is too clear-cut to be entirely accurate, and there is much evidence for continuity (see Coleman 1990), but at least some part of the Latin literary world perceived a genuine watershed, and it is worth asking how much this holds true for their Greek contemporaries.

The best evidence for 96 as a conceptual break comes from Dio Chrysostom, a local notable from Prusa in Bithynia who was active in Rome for much of his career. He is the author of a large corpus including sophistic display pieces, Cynic and Stoic philosophical essays, and set-piece orations addressed to cities throughout the East, as well as to the emperor Trajan. He was born in the 40s, and was professionally active from the 70s to

the 100s. His career thus bridged the dynastic gap, but it is not always clear under which regime a given piece was written, and none of his works contains explicit language or ideological characteristics that mark it as distinctly Flavian. Several of his works are usually dated to the 70s and 80s, but this is typically because they are seen as jejune rhetorical display pieces and therefore juvenalia (see Arnim 1898, esp. 154–71). A large part of his work does, however, show distinctive “post-Flavian” characteristics, in that it vilifies Domitian, strikes themes that are prominent in Trajan’s ruling ideology more generally and, most significantly, alludes to the author’s experiences as an oppositional, or at least persecuted, figure during the reign of Domitian. The picture is further complicated because secondary evidence suggests that before becoming an enemy of the Flavian dynasty, Dio had in fact ostentatiously aligned himself with their cultural priorities. Even though he was probably never in the inner counsels of any emperors (see Sidebottom 1996), he still comes across as a chameleon figure whose career and cultural role went through profound changes according to political events in Rome.

These changes need to be seen in the larger context of the philosophically colored expressions of discontent with Nero and the Flavians that are described in Trajanic sources and have often gone by the name of the “Stoic opposition” (see the influential treatment of MacMullen 1966, 46–94; Penwill 2003). It is no longer usual to speak of a stark nineteenth- or twentieth-century-style ideological conflict of totalitarian emperors against doctrinaire Stoic dissidents in the senate and their Greek philosophical mentors. Stoicism was not inherently against the Roman monarchy in the way that socialism is inherently against aristocratic government (see Brunt 1975). Nonetheless, it is clear that Roman political figures who quarreled with the new dynasty used philosophical language to do so and reinforced that language by associating themselves with philosophers, usually from the Greek world. The emperors in their turn, seeking a broad-based method of attacking their critics, accepted the critics’ self-identification with philosophy, and blanket expulsions of philosophers were decreed once each in the reigns of Vespasian and Domitian. Such actions against a category of persons defined by their cultural role were a Roman tradition, and it can be assumed that in practice how much they applied to a given philosophically inclined individual depended on how the emperor regarded that person or his associates. Dio Chrysostom’s highly varied experiences are an illustration of the point.

Under Vespasian, Dio appears to have flourished. He was based in Rome for at least part of the 70s and was connected with the Italian Stoic Musonius Rufus, who was exiled once under Nero and again under Vespasian (see Penwill 2003, 354–5). Dio did not suffer along with his teacher, for reasons that are obscure but discreditable. A fourth-century treatise on Dio mentions his having written a treatise *Against the Philosophers* that cannot be identified with any of his surviving writings. Its salient point seems to have been scurrilous abuse of Stoics especially, including a characterization of them as “a plague on cities and governments” that should be “driven from all lands and seas” (Synesius *Dio* 2). The treatise mentions nothing about specific political circumstances, but the language of expulsion makes it hard to resist connecting the treatise with events of Vespasian’s reign. The same is true of the lost but apparently hostile *To Musonius*. This may be a case of Dio as a straightforward turncoat attacking his friends for personal advantage (so Moles 1978, expanding on Momigliano 1951), although an apparent favorable reference to Musonius in the *Rhodian* oration (*Or.* 31.122) and a general lack

of evidence for a lasting break suggest that we are missing several pieces of the puzzle. Here, as elsewhere, whatever Dio said about his political role had more to do with his immediate rhetorical purposes than with a desire to give us an accurate account of himself. What does seem likely, however, is that the youthful Dio, in the course of defining himself intellectually within the traditional Greek categories of “philosopher,” “sophist” and so forth, deliberately mapped those categories on to the Roman political discourses surrounding the new dynasty. Taking political sides was not at this stage merely a form of pragmatic career advancement for Dio, it was an integral part of his role as a Hellenic man of culture.

The later phase of Dio’s career under the Flavians is better documented in his surviving writings, though details still elude us. At some point in the reign of Domitian, Dio went from a self-proclaimed ally of the regime to a target, willing or otherwise, of its wrath. The most plausible, though by no means certain, reconstruction (laid out most thoroughly by Verrengia 1999, 66–85) is that in 82, early in Domitian’s reign, Dio was involved in the fall and death of the emperor’s cousin Flavius Sabinus. Dio’s punishment was likely a less severe form of exile that banned him only from Bithynia and Rome and allowed him to retain his property. Although this occurred before the general attack on philosophers, Dio’s later writings and the ancient biographical tradition both tend to associate his punishment with that wider phenomenon. Dio claims to have spent the period in travelling, including beyond the Danube frontier, until he was recalled on the death of Domitian. He also claims to have been a longtime friend of Nerva’s and to have found favor with his successor (*Or.* 45.2–3). This story is culled from a wide variety of writings, however, and Dio portrays himself differently in each context. In the *On Exile*, adopting a somewhat tongue-in-cheek Cynic-Socratic persona, he portrays himself as a rather passive character who had the bad luck to be caught up in the political misfortunes of an unnamed but powerful acquaintance (*Or.* 13.1, with Moles 2005, 120–1). It was only when people started mistaking him for a philosopher (presumably because they associated philosophy with persecution) that he started to think and act like one, thus turning his sentence into a self-fulfilling prophecy (*Or.* 13.11). No explicit mention is made of Nerva’s accession or Dio’s restoration to favor; rather, the end of Dio’s story (*Or.* 13.31–7) finds him preaching to a generic, timeless Roman audience that seems rather like a militaristic version of Socrates’ Athenian contemporaries. On the explicit level, political events are a mere plot device that enables Dio’s philosophical role-playing. However, a contemporary audience that associated philosophy with opposition to the late tyrant would have made implicit connections and accorded Dio’s Cynic posturing a greater authenticity based on his presumed experiences.

On other occasions, the connections are far more explicit. *Oration 45* is a speech of self-justification to his fellow Prusans, set early in the reign of Trajan. Dio’s persona here is of someone well connected and active in imperial politics. He claims to have spoken out bravely against Domitian, seemingly in full anticipation of the consequences (*Or.* 45.1). He later made every effort to use his friendship with Nerva and his good credit with Trajan on behalf of his fellow-citizens, who have unaccountably failed to show him sufficient gratitude. Dio will take much the same position throughout the Bithynian orations: there will be less name-dropping, but the same sense of the speaker’s involvement in a higher sphere of politics than that of his audience, parallel to his higher cultural and moral status. Nonetheless, Dio does expect that his listeners and readers will share and

be invested in his view of Domitian as the tyrannical villain and Nerva and Trajan as enlightened rulers. This is the same Dio we see in the *Kingship Orations*, a set of four quasi-philosophical speeches on the duties of a monarch. They are addressed to an unnamed ruler, and it has usually been thought that they were delivered before Trajan. This may be true, but they certainly circulated throughout the Greek world in written form and may have been (re-)performed in contexts other than their explicit setting (see Whitmarsh 2001, 325–7). From the point of view of a reading or listening public, Dio is a highly connected cultural celebrity to whom they can look for direction as to the ideological scripts that the new regime will ask them to enact, and the ways in which they can play their own parts so as to influence their rulers.

The diversity of the positions described above has seemed to many readers, ancient and modern, like an inconsistency that needs reconciling, often by recourse to biographical speculation and a Procrustean ideological taxonomy of “Sophistic,” “Cynic” and “Stoic” periods (see the still influential Arnim 1898, with Harris 1991 on later developments). This is to misread Dio’s corpus as a unified exposition of the author’s consistently evolving personal convictions. It can more fruitfully be seen as illustrating the variety of ways in which someone in Dio’s social and political position could construct himself relative to his various listening and reading publics in order to meet whatever rhetorical objectives seemed to him right or expedient at a given moment. For our purposes, the most interesting thing that emerges is the tension between generality and specificity in Dio’s approach to Roman politics. At times, as in the *On Exile*, “the Romans” can be a rather undifferentiated set of colonial masters and generic figures of military power, much as they had been in Greek rhetoric for two centuries. The same non-specific approach can be found in the political speeches to cities. It is significant that the two biggest of these, the *Alexandrian* and the *Rhodian*, are sometimes given Flavian dates (see Jones 1973; Momigliano 1951) and sometimes Trajanic (Sidebottom 1992). A Latin author would have come up with something more ideologically specific to a given reign. At other times, however, Dio’s Romans can be quite specific figures with differentiated ideological significances. Domitian is a certain kind of villain whose actions will be familiar to the audience. On the explicit level, the *Kingships* are highly generalized and most of their content might ostensibly be addressed to any emperor, or indeed any monarch. Dio’s audience knows, however, that they are the sort of speech one gave to a particular emperor, Trajan, and that their generic-sounding content is meant to reflect the difference between his regime and Domitian’s (Whitmarsh 2001, 183–8).

Dio thus shares at least in part the Flavian experience of his Latin contemporaries. Can his experience be generalized, or is he an outlier because of his unusual closeness to the court? Plutarch, who was also born in the 40s and whose even larger corpus of biographies and philosophical essays also straddles the Flavian-Trajanic divide, is the most obvious comparison. Once again, few of Plutarch’s works can be certainly or probably dated to the Flavian period (possibilities include the *Consolation to His Wife*, the *On Brotherly Love* and the *On Restraining Anger*). The *Parallel Lives*, the *Table Talk* and the long political treatises are all Trajanic in date, and on any reckoning Plutarch was far more prolific in his 60s and 70s under Trajan than in his 30s to 50s under the Flavians (see Jones 1966). This counterintuitive career pattern has led some to place him among those authors who, like Tacitus and Pliny the Younger, were deterred by the literary atmosphere of Domitian’s reign and only found their voice after 96 (see Jones 1971, 20–7).

A particularly tricky question concerns Plutarch's *Lives of the Caesars*, which originally covered from Augustus to Vitellius, although only the *Galba* and *Otho* have survived. The surviving portions contain no internal references that make dating certain, and a strong, though not conclusive, case can be made for dating the entire project to Domitian's time (Bowersock 1998) or even Vespasian's (Stadter 2005). Arguments for a Nervan or Trajanic date tend to rely heavily on a priori assumptions about what was unsafe to write under which emperors (Syme 1980; Geiger 2002). But if one assigns a Domitianic date to the *Caesars*, which cover the most politically sensitive subject matter in the whole Plutarchan corpus, it complicates the picture. While there are still good reasons for thinking that the death of Domitian was related to an increase in Plutarch's writing, we should avoid assuming that the earlier hesitancy stemmed straightforwardly from fear of a repressive regime.

Similarly, if one looks at retrospective work from the Trajanic period, Plutarch shares in the posthumous denigration of Domitian and his house, but the issue is considerably less central to his thinking than it is for Pliny or Tacitus. References to the Flavian emperors personally are suitably derogatory, but they are few. In the *Amatorius*, Plutarch condemns Vespasian for his cold-hearted treatment of Empona, the faithful wife of a Gaulish rebel (771C); in the *On Curiosity* (522E) he tells the story of giving a lecture in Rome to an audience including Arulenus Rusticus, one of Domitian's most prominent senatorial antagonists. The audience is clearly expected to revile Domitian, revere Rusticus and give Plutarch credit for having been on the right side of that era's conflicts. What one misses, however, is the sense of Domitian as a defining figure in the author's experience. Even if it is true that Plutarch found the literary atmosphere more congenial under Trajan than Domitian, it is significant that he never says so, even in works that are explicitly addressed to high political figures in Trajan's court. Plutarch did not like Domitian any more than Tacitus and Pliny did, but any hatred he felt was less loudly expressed.

A glance at the wider picture confirms the notion that Greek speakers shared at least some of their Latin contemporaries' experiences with the Flavians, even if they were less inclined to talk about them in explicit terms. On the one hand, the new Trajanic regime does appear to have put forth its own new ideological line in Greek as well as Latin, perhaps most notably in the history of Trajan's northern campaigns written by the physician Statilius Crito (aka Kriton of Pieria, *FGH* 200, see Scarborough 1985). Domitian is not mentioned in the few surviving fragments, but it hard to see why a laudatory historian of Trajan would have avoided the swipes at his predecessor that we see in the Latin tradition. It is worth asking, however, if there was a distinct and specifically Greek experience of the Flavians. While it would be anachronistic to speak of the Flavians as having an ideologically unified policy or agenda with regard to Greek cultural activity, they did have a consistent set of preferences and attitudes. The Flavians practiced what was by Roman standards an interventionist or even tyrannical form of personal rule, and so those preferences and attitudes ended up informing a lot of actions that, while they were primarily intended to address the emperors' immediate political situation, nevertheless reshaped the way Greek authors, orators and philosophers functioned and defined themselves. Unlike Nero, who tried to redefine the role of emperor in terms of his version of Hellenic excellence, Vespasian and Domitian appear to have promoted those aspects of Greek culture that they saw as politically useful or congruent with their preconceived ideas of their own role. Examples include Vespasian's founding of chairs of rhetoric in

Rome (Suet. *Vesp.* 18), and Domitian's establishment of a premier Greek athletic and literary contest in the capital (Suet. *Dom.* 4.4), as well as his assumption of the archonship at Athens (*IG II²* 1996). The Flavians engaged in more philhellenism than they are sometimes credited with: the eastern part of the empire was after all their original military power base, and their reign would see increased integration of eastern elites into the Roman power structure (see later in this chapter).

Nonetheless they would do much to damage their own later reputation in the east. Long-remembered incidents included Vespasian's cancellation of the free status (that is, limited autonomy from provincial administration and central taxation) that Nero had decreed for the cities of Achaia (Philostr. *VA* 5.41 $\approx$ Apollonius *Ep.* 42f–h), and the somewhat mysterious episode in which Domitian decreed a massive reduction of vine cultivation in the provinces (see CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, section 5 and CHAPTER 10, THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FLAVIAN RULE, section 3.3). This heavy-handed interference with a key part of the local economy drew loud and successful remonstrances from the *koinon* (provincial association) of Asia (Philostr. *VS* 520). The joint effort may indicate local elites' increased sense of their collective role in imperial politics, and it gave at least one orator, Scopelian of Clazomenae, a chance to earn wide renown for representing his fellow provincials. The quasi-philosophical opposition is the most significant episode, however, as we have already seen with Dio and Plutarch. The characterization of "philosophers" as an oppositional political group had clear cultural implications for people who thought of philosophy as a specifically Greek activity. Epictetus, as we have him through Arrian, has relatively few direct references to Flavian persecution (notably Epict. 1.2.19–25 on Helvidius Priscus), but his contemporaries, like Dio's, would have remembered his banishment and his association with the Flavians' victims when they heard his teachings on exile and tyrannical power (see Starr 1949; Penwill 2003, 365–6), and the same goes for Musonius Rufus, an Italian who wrote in Greek (see Whitmarsh 2001, 141–55). The period remained a defining episode in later memory. When Antonine and Severan authors wanted to imagine Greek cultural figures in conflict with Roman tyrants, it was to Neronian and Flavian figures that they turned (see for example, Lucian *Pereg.* 18, also Marcus *Med.* 1.14). Above all Philostratus uses the Flavian era, both its beginning and its end, as the stage for his heavily fictionalized version of Apollonius of Tyana to exert a suspiciously large influence on Roman politics. Apollonius of Tyana is very hard to reconstruct as a historical figure, and was undoubtedly considerably more marginal than Philostratus' hero, but the idea of him as an enemy of Domitian is not entirely Philostratus' creation. An independent reference in Cassius Dio (67.18.1) has him in Ephesus receiving a vision of the tyrant's death, and the corpus of his letters, whatever their origins, contains two letters in which the sage rebukes the emperor (*Epist.* 21, 22). The salient dates and events of Roman politics in the 60s to 90s remained significant reference points in the self-fashioning and collective memory of contemporary and later Greek authors. It is true and significant that the volume of material praising and denigrating the Flavian monarchs is much greater in Tacitus and Pliny than in their Greek contemporaries. Some of this is due to the Latin authors' greater exposure to their rulers, but not all. The discourse in which Pliny, Tacitus, and their Latin peers wrote required them to take the persona of public men, and if anything to make exaggeratedly frequent references to their rulers. For Greek-speakers it was the opposite: their discourse privileged the classical past and Hellenic cultural autonomy over specific references to the contemporary scene. Naturally, these discourses affected

people's actual experience of the period, but they did not dictate it. The very reluctance of Greek authors to make direct allusions to political circumstances should make us more sensitive in looking for indirect ones. That is, at any rate, how these authors were read by their own immediate descendants.

3 The Flavian era as a cultural-historical epoch

Having examined how our traditional Roman political narrative is reflected in Greek literature, we can now turn to the accepted narrative of Greek cultural history and look at its relationship to Roman dynastic events. While, as I have already noted, many scholars would resist applying the label "Flavian" to Greek authors, it is nonetheless agreed that the later years of the first century marked an epoch in Greek literary and cultural affairs. It is in these years that the phenomena emerge that are usually referred to as the "Second Sophistic." Although that term was coined by Philostratus to refer to a specific form of declamatory performance, in the course of the twentieth century it came to be used, first, to refer to a broad cross-section of pagan prose literature from the imperial period and, subsequently, to refer to the entire cultural milieu from which that literature emerged (see Whitmarsh 2005, 4–10). That milieu is most often associated with the second century and consequently the Antonine dynasty, but Plutarch and especially Dio Chrysostom are generally included in it. Accounts of the period tend to be synchronic; scholars often start by asking what "Greeks in the Second Sophistic" thought on a given point, and go on to survey any authors between about 50 and 250 CE to produce a composite picture (for example, Anderson 1993; Swain 1996). The commonalities across the period are beyond dispute and the synchronic approach is often necessary, but in a specific study of the Flavian period a different approach is desirable, and the intersection of literature and politics suggests itself as the best place to look. Thus in this section we will be considering the overtly political works of Plutarch (esp. *Should Old Men Engage in Politics?* and *Precepts of Politics*) and Dio (the city speeches from the *Rhodian* through the various Prusan pieces), and asking two questions. First, can we read these texts as representative of a particular cultural-political moment rather than a condition that operated uniformly over the course of 200 years? Second, if so, can we characterize that moment as Flavian?

We must begin with a certain amount of background. The defining feature of the Second Sophistic is usually taken to be a particular attitude to the Greek past, as expressed in archaism of literary style and content. While these attitudes appear (and have in the past been read) as apolitical aesthetic changes, current readings, in line with critical trends more generally, tend to construct such ostentatious cultural autonomy as in itself a political position with implications for the workings of power more broadly defined. In the case of the Second Sophistic, this has often led to a postcolonial reading, in which Greeks position their culture as an autonomous counterweight to Roman political power (for example, Swain 1996, and Vasunia 2003 on Plutarch specifically). From a historical point of view, however, Roman domination in the Aegean world had been in place for 200 years by the time Dio and Plutarch were writing, so its existence alone cannot serve as a causal explanation for phenomena that emerge at that particular time. More promising candidates can be found in two related social-historical trends that begin in the late first century CE and find their fullest expression in the mid-second. The first of these is

the increased integration of the Greek-speaking elite into the Roman power structure, including the senate and the equestrian administration. It is disputed to what extent this affected literary figures as literary figures (see Bowersock 1969 and Bowie 1982), but it is beyond dispute that it concerned the wider elite of whom sophistic authors were a part. The phenomenon sees a marked increase in the reign of Vespasian and reaches its highest levels under the Antonines (for prosopographical studies, see Halfmann 1979 and Syme 1988). The second is an order-of-magnitude increase in the level of civic euergetism, the practice whereby the wealthiest families in Greek cities made ostensibly free gifts to their cities for buildings, festivals or other public amenities, and were visibly commemorated through honors, statues and inscriptions. While this had been part of *polis* culture since classical times, the volume of gifts became much greater in the late first and second centuries CE. Zuiderhoek (2009, esp. 53–70) has argued persuasively that this is an ideological effort to relegitimize elite control of city governments after first-century CE economic expansion and the resulting increase in wealth disparities had undermined the egalitarian citizen-ideology of the classical-Hellenistic *polis*.

The Flavians themselves have relatively little to do with these changes, although their having a political base in the eastern army and provinces did foster the promotion of some individuals from those provinces. The decisive factors were longer-term socio-economic phenomena that reached a certain point during their reigns. However, it is quite possible that contemporary perceptions of those phenomena may have incorporated distinctively Flavian ideological categories, and it is here that Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch come in. They are in fact our best literary witnesses from the entire Second Sophistic period for civic political culture and, crucially, they share with each other attitudes that are much less present in later Second Sophistic literature. Dio's city speeches show him advocating for his own benefactions to Prusa, and his constant exhortations to *homonoia* (concord) testify powerfully to social conflict in the contemporary urban scene, and to the need for an ideological response. Plutarch's treatises are more abstract, but give us an idealized portrait of the euergetic politician balancing pressure from the *dēmos* against his own and his Roman superiors' desire for oligarchic good order (see Kokkinia 2006). Both men say far more about city-level than empire-level politics, and their few comments about the latter (Plutarch's especially) tend to deprecate elite ambition for higher honors and to assert implicitly or explicitly that one's true political duties lie at the city level (esp. Plut. *Precepts* 814D; *On Contentment* 470C).

This last has been taken as an indication that the Greek elite in general placed a greater emotive and ethical value on political activity at the civic than at the imperial level (Swain 1996, 168–72; Salmeri 2000). This is to miss the larger context. These are individuals in particular rhetorical situations, and the specific opinions they advocate are less representative than the larger discourses of which they give us a partial glimpse. What matters is not that Plutarch and Dio privilege the local over the global, but that they and their implied audience see politics in terms of a particular dialectic between the two, that success at the imperial center and honor in one's home city are the two poles between which the elite Greek male navigates his political career. This is a new problem in the late first century. It is not only that Roman political opportunities are opening up for the first time and threatening the existing local political culture. That local culture is also changing from within in response to a new socio-economic reality, albeit one that has its roots in Roman imperialism. Plutarch and Dio write as old men, but what they are showing us is the new rhetoric of an aristocracy in transition.

Both authors express a certain optimism tempered by awareness of severely limited horizons. In Plutarch's case both the *Old Men* and the *Precepts* embrace the political role: the former treatise emphatically exhorts old men to be politically active, and mostly for reasons that apply equally to their younger counterparts. In these texts, political activity is a high calling that brings real glory and personal fulfillment, and Plutarch's tone is remarkably earnest. It is difficult to imagine any Second Sophistic author other than him or Dio opining *in propria persona* with no apparent irony that "political service (*politeia*) is not a particular task (*leitourgia*) that ends when some need ceases, but it is one's whole life as a civilized, communal (*politikos*), social (*koinōnikos*) animal whose nature it is to live out its allotted time as a citizen loving the good and his fellow man" (*Old Men* 791c). Much the same can be said for Dio's praise of *homonoia* and the scolding tone he takes toward those who do not practice it.

Both men sound distinctly dark notes as well, however. By far the most quoted passages of the *Precepts* are those in which Plutarch reminds the would-be politician that he is not at the top of the pyramid, but is on the contrary closely accountable to Roman governors who leave him a profoundly circumscribed field of action (813D–816A). Dio sounds much the same when he urges urban audiences not to think in terms of primacy (*prōteia*) in their rivalry with their neighbors. The rivalry of Sparta and Athens is scarcely a fit model for the limited world of today, and primacy would be an empty title compared to the concrete benefits that would derive from *homonoia* (see for example, *Or.* 34.51, to the Tarsians). His speeches to Prusa reveal further frustrations in his chosen roles of *euergetēs* and of mediator between his *patris* and his friends at court. On the one hand, his connections in Rome have proven insufficient, and he cannot deliver all that is expected of him (*Or.* 45.3–5). On the other hand, his building projects in Prusa have not earned him the recognition he expected, perhaps because the entrenched local aristocracy resents him as a parvenu (esp. *Or.* 43 and 47 with Bekker-Nielsen 2008, 125–36). As a result, the earnestness noted above comes with an equally conspicuous realism and a sense of knowing one's limits. Politics brings glory, but one must look for the right sort of glory from the right sort of people. Both authors employ a persistent dichotomy between the showy and the useful in politics. Plutarch's embrace of the unromantic side of public service goes as far as taking pride in personally supervising the measuring of tiles and delivery of building supplies, as long as it is for the public good (*Precepts* 811c).

In both cases, and Dio's especially, these texts testify to their authors' real-life political experience, but that is less important than that they show two cultural figures from different parts of the Greek world employing much the same rhetoric. It is a rhetoric that is unique to them within Second Sophistic literature, not because they were uniquely patriotic or politically engaged, or because the realities of politics were especially different from any other time, but because their contemporary audience had a unique interest in the subject. Epigraphic and prosopographic evidence tells us that the euergetic regime that developed at this period persisted and grew throughout the second century, but it is only in this generation that we have so much literary confirmation. One can contrast Dio's and Plutarch's writings with those of the rhetorician Aelius Aristides in the 150s to 170s. Aristides addresses cities, including the Rhodians, and was surely aware of Dio as a precedent (see Swain 1996, 284–97 for parallels). He does repeatedly invoke *homonoia* (esp. *Or.* 23 and 24), but does so with page after page of generalities and at most the odd sentence (notably 24.29) to indicate what are the particular manifestations of discord that he is rebuking. The contrast with Dio's interminable chastising and his imagined

counter-arguments from the audience could not be stronger. Aristides does not seem to think his audience really wants to hear about city politics. Then again in the fourth *Sacred Tale*, he thanks Aesclepius at length for assisting his legal efforts to avoid municipal political commitments, efforts that he describes in unblushing detail (50.71–108, with Behr 1968, 61–70, 77–86; Kokkinia 2006, 186–9). Philostratus likewise tells us that Polemo and Herodes Atticus both had political struggles, in Smyrna and Athens respectively, that are quite reminiscent of what Dio narrates (for example, *VS* 531–2, 549). Philostratus mentions that they gave speeches in the course of these struggles that were perhaps similar in content to Dio's and might even have been influenced by him. But these speeches have not survived to our time, and it is not clear whether they circulated at all: Philostratus' account may come from oral tradition rather than consultation of the actual speeches. It is certainly taken for granted throughout the *Sophists* that these speakers will take the fullest advantage they can of their professional exemption from public service: Philostratus describes how Favorinus even imagines Dio rebuking him for shirking his duties (*VS* 490). The point is not that people had become less public-spirited since Dio's and Plutarch's time, but that the earlier generation were unique in considering this ideological material the sort of thing that prominent authors should write about for empire-wide audiences. In part this is because the political circumstances of the Flavian period were new, and because the changes of dynasty required speeches like Dio's *Kingships* to articulate for subjects the changes and constants in political language at the top. The second century would see a single ideology persisting at a local level and fewer changes at the top: even those emperors (Hadrian, Commodus, Septimius Severus) whose agendas differed markedly from their predecessors' would still claim formal continuity with them.

In another sense, however, the literary milieu itself was new in the Flavian era. A truly distinctive feature of surviving Second Sophistic literature as opposed to Hellenistic literature, or to any kind of Latin literature in the Principate, is its geographical status. While Second-Sophistic literature was read by an empire-wide public (which is why it has survived to our own time), its authors were by and large not based at the center of political power or dependent on patrons there. We find sophistic authors instead in the cities of Asia Minor and mainland Greece, above all Athens; there are some in Rome and Italy, but the capital is no longer the pervasive literary magnet that it was for Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Strabo a few generations before. We can assume that there had always been literary activity in these smaller cities, but it had remained in a local setting. Starting with Dio and Plutarch, there is a global market for a local product. This presumably stems in part from the simple fact of increased elite wealth creating demand, but it also cannot be unrelated to the new political realities alluded to above. Urban elites are starting to be part of broader empire-wide networks, but at the same time a strong relationship with one's *patris* is becoming if anything a more absolute requirement for the cultural role of Greek aristocrat. Had they lived even 50 years earlier, one could imagine Dio making his base in Rome after his early studies there, writing works that we might still have, and maintaining limited contact with his fellow Prusans, who for all Dio's patriotism are not portrayed in his writings as the sort of people one would really miss. Plutarch by contrast would have been a star of the local literary scene in Boeotia, but we might have at most an inscription to tell us he had ever lived or written. The ideological imperatives of their own day required both men to play on both stages, imperial and

civic, at the same time. It is in this sense that the Second Sophistic can be said to have a political origin. The political circumstances here mentioned explain the emergence of a new form of literature rather than its content, and a full consideration of the latter question is not possible here. A key point, however, is that Atticism and archaism, as discourses of cultural authority, make more sense as the rhetoric of a civic elite explicitly addressing fellow Hellenes than they do in a Rome-based setting dominated by patronage (see Schmitz 1997; Vasunia 2003). Locally produced literature would continue to find an empire-wide market, and the dialectic would persist between imperial and local politics, but the latter would never again be addressed so explicitly in the former.

One may ask in conclusion how specifically Flavian this proposed origin is, especially since all of the Plutarchan material discussed and most of the Dionian can be dated to after 96. I have already noted the dynasty's role in increased political integration at the top. It is worth mentioning also that the rhetoric Dio and Plutarch use has elements that one might call distinctly Flavian. The sinister warnings about authority reflect the autocratic side of Vespasian and Domitian, and their tendency to punish ostentatious displays of talent and ambition. On the other hand, even the Flavians' later critics conceded that they were fair and efficient administrators (Suet. *Vesp.* 8–10, *Dom.* 8). There is a great deal in Plutarch's *Precepts* that reminds one more of Vespasian's Sabine unpretentiousness and Domitian's devotion to order than of Trajan's military bonhomie. Perhaps the one other author who most closely mirrors Plutarch and Dio's political concerns is not in fact a Greek at all, but the Tacitus of the *Agricola* and the *Dialogus*. The first especially of these works features the same idealization of mundane administrative achievement and the same concern with authentic, as opposed to specious, glory. There is the same opposition between a political present constrained by arbitrary higher powers as against a free past in which one had greater scope: in Tacitus' case the *princeps* replaces the proconsul and the free Republic replaces classical Hellas. While Tacitus' writings date to the period immediately after Domitian's death, the political mentality they represent was formed in the Flavian era, during which the *Dialogus* is set and the real *Agricola* had his career. It is only under Trajan and his successors that Syme's "Greeks Invading the Roman Government" hit their stride, but a case can be made that it is under the Flavians that Greek speakers start to use Roman political ideologies for self-definition. Thus Plutarch's *On the Fortune or Merit of Alexander* (usually seen as a Flavian work) has been read as a retrojection into the Greek past of a Roman sense of "civilizing imperialism" (see Asirvatham 2005). For generations, Romans had used the display–utility dichotomy to define themselves relative to *Graeci*: when it became the rhetoric of the Flavian governing class, then self-identified Hellenes could place themselves on the positive side of the opposition.

Conclusion: Greek and Flavian in Josephus

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus is addressed fully elsewhere in this volume, but he should not be omitted entirely here. He wrote Greek literature in the Flavian period, but both the Flavianness and the Greekness manifest themselves in ways that are quite different from those seen in elite pagan authors, and the contrast will add depth to a reading of those authors. The Flavian aspect of Josephus goes without saying: all four of his surviving

works date to the period (see Chapman 2009, 322 with further references). Vespasian and Titus are major characters in the *Jewish War*, and references to the dynasty and its ideology are far more frequent than in any other Greek author. The references are uniformly positive, which is not surprising given that the Flavians were in power at the time, but awkward given that Josephus had begun his career fighting against them as a rebel in Judea only to end it in Rome as their favored dependent. It is not necessary for our purposes to determine how much real contact he had with the emperors or whether they dictated propaganda lines to him (for Josephus as in fact a covert critic of Flavian dynastic rule, see Mason 2003 and 2009). What is crucial is that he engages and identifies with the dynasty's history far more than either Plutarch or Dio, but the aspects of that history he chooses are entirely different. For Josephus, the critical event is naturally the Jewish revolt and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, but he integrates these parts of his own experience into a Flavian narrative in which the Jewish revolt is part of the dynasty's founding myth. On a thematic level, Josephus sees the Jews' defeat as another instance of God punishing his people's transgressions, but that divine agency can be made to dovetail nicely with the heavy emphasis Vespasian placed on the divine causality of his own rise to power. Structurally, the Roman civil wars, especially Vitellius' occupation of the capital, are an evident counterpoint to the stasis that for Josephus is the material cause of the Jews' destruction (explicit at *BJ* 4.545). The Flavians end both of these conflicts, and the misery that end brings to Jerusalem is balanced by the strangely full account of their setting of the Roman world to rights and above all Titus' triumph, which is the subject of a climactic set-piece ending with the dedication of the Jerusalem Temple spoils in the new Flavian Temple of Peace (*BJ* 7.158–62, see Beard 2003).

The contrast with Plutarch and Dio is clear and unsurprising. For them it is the end of the dynasty that is the key historical event, not the beginning. Of course neither author had the immediate personal connection with the earlier events that Josephus had. We should not assume, however, that their experiences are completely representative and Josephus' not at all. After all, there were more Jewish figures in Greek literature than just Josephus, and more easterners were affected by the events of 69–70 than just the Jews. The whole Levant became first a military theater and then the base of a civil-war faction. In addition, where Josephus is a contemporary Flavian-era voice, Plutarch and Dio both write mostly from the hindsight of Trajan's reign, from a time when it was easy and expedient to see the Flavians as a continuation of the bad old Julio-Claudian days. The one probable exception, Plutarch's *Galba-Otho*, contains little specifically Flavian material, though much generic dread of military anarchy. We might think differently, however, if his *Vitellius* also had survived, and it may well be that many a Greek author at the time shared Josephus' willingness to integrate the narrative of his own world with that of the dynasty that ruled it from afar.

The question of whether Josephus personally was in any sense Greek is beyond our scope here. He was, however, the author of works that are explicitly Greek not only in language but also in form, in intended audience, and in the questions they address. Regardless of how well or badly Josephus may really have known Greek literature, the rhetoric of Greek historiography and especially of Thucydides in the *Jewish War* is easy to trace through his writings (see references throughout Marincola 1997). Both the *Jewish Antiquities* and the *Apion* make explicit reference in their prefaces to Greek (and by extension Roman) ignorance and misapprehension regarding the

Jewish people (*AJ* 1.2.5–9; *Ap.* 1.2–3). Josephus is positioning himself within discourses in which Greek-speaking pagans were surely holding up their end of the confrontation, and Tacitus shows us how the question of the Jews' historical status took on a quite new complexion in the wake of a revolt that had repercussions throughout the east. To the extent that Greek literature is the literature that Greeks read (as opposed to wrote), then Josephus' works are Greek literature. Once again, however, they are a very different sort of Greek literature from that of Dio and Plutarch. Leaving aside questions of style and genre, they represent a different literary world (though see Jones 2005 for commonalities). In some ways Josephus is the last of one tradition of Greek writers, and they are the first of another. On the one hand, Josephus' self-positioning relative to the Greek world is reminiscent of older authors (for example, Manetho and Berossus) who had spoken to Greeks about non-Greek cultures from a privileged position within that culture's religious institutions: it is a distinctly Hellenistic rather than Second-Sophistic kind of writing. On the other hand, there is self-positioning relative to Rome. Josephus wrote as a displaced ex-patriot in Rome; he was explicitly and unashamedly reliant on powerful Roman patrons; his writings are in part a conscious explanation of his own world as it has been radically changed by Roman military might. In this he goes back to a series of figures from Polybius through the late Republican and Augustan years to Strabo (see Yarrow 2006). Dio and Plutarch are mostly active in their home cities, where they are prominent members of the local elite, or other Greek cities before audiences of their peers; they address Romans not as dependent clients but as fellow aristocrats or (in the case of the emperor) esteemed subjects; the present for them has its dynastic struggles and its civic conflicts, but no catastrophes; they see themselves as having at least a limited ability to order their own world, and Roman power is if anything the ultimate guarantor of that existing order. Of course these oppositions are too schematic to describe the full reality of Greek cultural politics. Both of these types of author had existed before the Flavians and would continue to exist after them (see for example, Lucian's *On Salaried Posts*). The key difference is that Dio and Plutarch's type would become the dominant voice in literary discourse, the one that has survived to our own time as characteristic of what we in retrospect call the High Empire. The Flavian emperors did not cause that change, nor did it reach full realization in their time. It did begin under them, however, and I hope to have shown that this is more than a chronological coincidence, and that Roman dynastic change expressed itself in Greek as well as in Latin.

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FURTHER READING

Flavian authors, although not the Flavian period specifically, figure prominently in general accounts of Second Sophistic literature, especially Reardon (1971); Swain (1996) and Whitmarsh (2001). Jones' books on Plutarch (1971) and Dio Chrysostom (1978) are invaluable in integrating those authors into their Roman, including Flavian, contexts. For Plutarch, they can be supplemented by Flacelière (1963); Puech (1992) and several of the essays in Stadter and Van der Stockt (2002); in Dio's case Moles (1978) and (1995); Sidebottom (1996); Salmeri (2000) and Bekker-Nielsen (2008) offer important later perspectives. For Josephus, the essays in Edmondson, Mason and Rives (2005) address the questions most critical to this article. The issues of Greek city politics raised in this essay are addressed at length by Zuiderhoek (2009).

CHAPTER 26

Lost Literature

Michael Dewar

1 Latin literature

Among the poets recommended by Quintilian to aspiring orators who wish to improve their style and diction, a brief space is made for the name of Saleius Bassus. Quintilian includes him in the section of his reading list given over to distinguished authors of epic verse, and praises him warmly, as a “vigorous and creative talent” who died before age could bring him to ripeness (*Inst.* 10.1.90). The warmth of Quintilian is exceeded by that of Tacitus, or at least by the enthusiasm of the character of Julius Secundus in the *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, who goes so far as to declare him “a consummate poet” (*absolutissimum poetam*, *Dial.* 5.2). Another participant in the debate, Marcus Aper, adds the striking information (*Dial.* 9.5) that Vespasian honored Bassus for his verse by giving him half a million *sestertii*; that is a very considerable fortune indeed, and when a man infamous for being careful with his money turns lavish, the honor shown serves as a rebuke to the stinginess of mere words. Yet the name of Saleius Bassus can appear on no modern student’s reading list for the simple fact that not a single word of his poetry survives, unless there is a line or two lying unregarded in the anonymous bits and pieces at the back of Büchner’s *Fragmenta Poetarum Latinorum*. So deep is our ignorance that we do not know so much as the title or the subject-matter of his epic. Therefore, we cannot even confidently class it with those written on mythological themes, such as the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, a contemporary who also appears on Quintilian’s list, or say if it instead belonged, like the *Punica* of Silius Italicus, to the tradition of recounting subject-matter drawn from Roman history in the high Homeric style. For all we know, a phrase or two of Bassus may in fact have been given a new home in such a poem as the *Punica*, with the intention of achieving some effect that was not merely decorative but had an intertextual resonance of real importance for interpretation. If so, our understanding of Silius is impoverished in ways we cannot even usefully guess about. In other words, the pity of it all is not just that we have lost some literature that was apparently of high quality, but that we have also lost something of the context that would, if the world were just, help shape any literary history we might want to write for the Flavian Age.

Whatever Saleius Bassus wrote, and however good it was, he deserved better of Fortune than to survive principally as a straw man in Aper's exaltation of oratory over poetry, as an example of someone who wrote verse because he had no gift for writing speeches (*Dial.* 5.3).

Of course, if we had everything, we might find it too much to bear, and we would in any case still have to do some of Fortune's work for her and make omissions of our own if we hoped ever to write a coherent account at all. And different ages, like different individuals, will think some losses more easily borne than others. That we perhaps have more Flavian epic than we need is a thought that has surely occurred to some readers who have found themselves flagging a little when they have got halfway through the 17 books of the *Punica*, even if scholars are made of sterner stuff or have more need of material to work on. The love poetry of Sulpicia, on the other hand, is a loss likely to be more keenly felt in the feminized academy of the early twenty-first century than it was in the days when editors tidied away the more "nauseous epigrams of Martial" (Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, Canto 1, Stanza 43) so as to avoid the charge of wishing to corrupt schoolboys. The only female poet of ancient Rome from whose works any complete poems survive – another Sulpicia, as it happens, who wrote elegies in the time of Augustus – has become the specialized focus of a small army of critics. Blood-chilling battle has been joined over how much of the Tibullan corpus is truly hers, with one side determined to confiscate as much as possible from the patriarchal bully we call Tibullus and the other going so far as to deprive her of historical existence altogether by reducing her to the status of a literary *persona*, a Tibullan drag-act of doubtful motivation. Scholars are ingenious, but they would have to be a lot more agile to do as much with the two surviving iambic trimeters of the Flavian Sulpicia. What we do have, though, hints at considerable riches, as Sulpicia manages to pack into these two lines a bed that seems to have suffered damage from rough usage and a naked author sharing it with her adored husband Calenus.¹ Certainly, Martial would pity us the loss. He recommends her "chaste and lawful love," and her playful, charming frolics, to all girls eager to please a single man and to all husbands eager to please a single bride (*Ep.* 10.35). All good clean fun, then, "frank without being obscene" (Courtney 1993, 361). It is not just the feminists and the literary historians who should feel aggrieved, as it looks as if Sulpicia's verse might have taught social historians something about Roman marriage that would give a wider background to what, for example, Pliny the Younger tells us about his wife Calpurnia as well as to all those bloodless epitaphs praising wives for the routine possession of traditional virtues.

As it happens, historians are particularly out of luck. While, even without Saleius Bassus, epic poetry from the Flavian period is unusually well preserved, history is among the genres that have suffered most from the processes of transmission. The most signal loss appears to be Fabius Rusticus. Tacitus pairs him for eloquence with Livy (*Agr.* 10.3), and an historian who won Tacitus' respect would surely have merited ours. He is probably the "man worthy to be remembered down the ages" whose name Quintilian expects us to supply for ourselves (*Inst.* 10.1.104). It looks as if the convention was that living authors were not named explicitly, and if it is indeed Rusticus that Quintilian has in mind, then his place in a catalog that includes an address praising Domitian as a poet (*Inst.* 10.1.91–2) neatly confirms his status as a Flavian author of the highest rank. The full scope of his history is not known, but Tacitus cites him in the *Annals* (13.20; 15.61)

as a source for the reign of Nero. That both Tacitus and Quintilian commend his style is no sure indication that what he said mattered less to Rusticus than how he said it. Tacitus himself declares that Rusticus prospered from his friendship with Seneca, whom he was therefore inclined to portray in flattering terms (*Ann.* 13.20). One way of interpreting that is to suggest that Rusticus' history would perhaps have served us well as a corrective to Tacitus' unrelenting cynicism.

Our other outstanding loss in the genre is the missing portion of Tacitus' *Historiae*. True, in the strictest possible sense, this cannot qualify as a work of the Flavian Age, having almost certainly been composed in the first decade of the second century. Its own author, however, presents himself as one whose career had had its beginning under Vespasian, and who had enjoyed further promotion under both his sons (*Hist.* 1.1). Indeed, many of his first readers will have remembered that it was through the favor of Domitian that Tacitus had risen to the glory of a suffect consulship in 97. A zealous respect for chronological limits should not be permitted to deny a place here for an account of the Flavian Age that comes from the pen of an historian who had lived through it and experienced its politics as a privileged insider, an account written, moreover, when the memory was fresh. Only four books of the *Historiae* have reached us more or less intact, for all that Tacitus' friend Pliny the Younger (*Epist.* 7.33.1) predicted immortality for the work. We shall never know what Tacitus made of the material that Pliny sent to him regarding his own memories of the eruption of Vesuvius (*Epist.* 6.16 and 20), but that is a small proportion of what we have been denied, as Tacitus' account of the whole period of Flavian rule after the end of the civil war down to the death of Domitian has gone with it. At *Hist.* 2.101 Tacitus mentions, without naming them, historians who wrote under the Flavians and whose works he had clearly consulted when preparing his own. They no doubt included Cluvius Rufus, who had enjoyed the favor of Gaius Caligula and Nero and whose own *Historiae* probably covered their reigns. Certainly, Rufus is named as a source for the time of Nero in Tacitus' other great history, the *Annales* (13.20, 14.2).

Also important among the sources of Tacitus was Pliny the Elder's history of his own time. Tacitus asked his friend, the younger Pliny, for a complete list of his famous uncle's works, and it is thanks to the reply he was sent (*Epist.* 3.5.6) that we know that Pliny's account was a continuation in no fewer than 31 books of the earlier history of Aufidius Bassus, though quite when in the first century Bassus left off is not clear to us. The actual composition of Pliny's *Historiae* can be securely dated to the reign of Vespasian, and in around 77 we find him telling Titus, the dedicatee of his *Naturalis Historia*, that it is complete (*NH* pr. 20). Tacitus notes the lack of agreement between Pliny, Cluvius Rufus, and Fabius Rusticus with regard to a supposed intervention on Seneca's part to deflect Nero from his intention to remove Burrus from the command of the Praetorian Guards in 55 (*Ann.* 13.20), and mentions Pliny again in his recounting of the Pisonian conspiracy of 65 (*Ann.* 15.53). The younger Pliny's list of his uncle's works is chronological, and among those that come before this account of his own time is another history, in 20 volumes, on the subject of "all the wars with the Germans" that the Romans had ever fought (*Epist.* 3.5.4). This was written when Pliny was still a young man, himself on military service in Germany: as he was born in 23/24 we should therefore probably date this *Bella Germaniae* to the reign of Claudius. It was, we are assured, inspired by a dream in which the young soldier was instructed by Drusus Nero himself, the stepson of Augustus

and father of Germanicus and Claudius, to turn his memories into literature and save his name from oblivion. It seems a fair bet that this is a summary of what the elder Pliny had said in the preface, and we have another insight into its contents from Tacitus' acknowledgment at *Ann.* 1.69 that he has drawn on "Gaius Pliny, the author of the *German Wars*," for the magnificent scene in which, during the mutiny of the legions on the German frontier, Drusus' daughter-in-law Agrippina helped stiffen the backbones of the panicking rank and file, persuading them not to demolish the bridge over the Rhine and standing at the head of it to thank the legionaries personally as they crossed over. A work written in the time of Claudius and used as a source for one written in the time of Trajan is not, of course, Flavian in the fullest sense, but it is an error to insist too pedantically on the artificial restraints imposed by any rigid chronology. The Flavian Age lasted a single generation, and the interconnections between uncle, nephew, and friend cannot be bundled tidily inside it.²

The orators enjoyed no better luck. Our best guides are, once more, Quintilian and Tacitus, who speak highly of, in particular, Julius Secundus. Tacitus goes so far as to make him a participant in the *Dialogus*, defending him against critics who underestimated him by declaring his style pure and restrained (*Dial.* 2.2). That is broadly in line with the judgment of Quintilian, who said that he only lacked what time would have brought him, had he lived: more pugnacity and a greater care for content rather than style. It is artistry that Quintilian admired in Secundus: his fluency, his charm, his gift for choosing the best expressions (*Inst.* 10.1.120–2). We can perhaps sense the lingering presence of a Flavian instantiation of an old chestnut of ancient literary criticism. Tacitus sets Secundus up in opposition to Marcus Aper, declared by his detractors to be all raw talent (*ingenium*) and no refinement (*ars*), which recalls, for instance, the contrary judgment of Ovid on Callimachus, that he was strong on *ars* but weak on *ingenium* (*Am.* 1.15.14). It may be Tacitus' contribution to the debate that he moves the two a little closer together by talking of their conscious preferences rather than the limitations imposed upon them by nature. We hear of this or that speech from other pens that would surely have been worth our time. Quintilian notes in passing his involvement in the case of Naevius Arpinianus who was had up on the charge of murdering his wife (*Inst.* 7.2.24). The defense turned on the question of whether she had been hurled to her death or had committed suicide by throwing herself out of a window. To be more precise, "out of a window" is a phrase occasionally added by translators, and Quintilian's Latin does not specify. A window is no doubt the most likely thing, but those of us with lurid imaginations, and no surviving copy of the speech to hold us back, are free to set the scene in a rooftop garden above a street with good Roman paving stones, or, if we speculate that the unfortunate woman had in some way offended tradition and her husband had a black sense of humor about the proprieties, up on the Tarpeian Rock. The devil of it is that the first readers of *Institutio Oratoria*, and Quintilian's pupils, could have gone and looked for a copy and found out the details for themselves, while our own morbid curiosity must go for evermore unsatisfied. Then again, Quintilian talks of having published the speech because he was led to do so by a youthful desire for glory, so perhaps the case is more likely, after all, to date to the reign of Nero than to that of Vespasian.³

Another genre much less well attested than epic is that quintessentially Roman form, satire. Quintilian briefly mentions living satirists whom he calls distinguished and for whom he predicts enduring fame (*Inst.* 10.1.94). The only one we can confidently put a name

to is Turnus, but it would be unfair to say that Quintilian was completely wrong: over three centuries later Rutilius Namatianus (*De Reditu Suo* 1.604) links Turnus' name with that of Juvenal, even if he only goes on to say that neither of them surpasses the satires of one of his own contemporaries. That is not certain proof that Namatianus had read much Turnus, but the long-lasting reputation is suggestive of quality. We in our poverty have a grand total of three lines, two of them tantalizingly describing Nero's preferred poisoner, Lucusta. They have been so badly mangled by the anonymous scholiast who cites them that a recent editor who is not shy of tackling problems head on finds himself obliged to use the obelus twice, and confesses that "the wording of Turnus has been lost beyond recovery" (Courtney 1993, 362).⁴

The subject matter of satire is close to that of Martial's epigrams, as Martial himself suggests in one poem that mentions Turnus' work (*Ep.* 7.97.7–8). The hierarchy of genres put tragedy above both, and when the epigrammatist claims that Turnus gave his talent to satire because tragedy was the chosen field of his brother Scaevus Memor (11.10), that is a compliment both to Memor's reputation and to Turnus' tact and fraternal *pietas* (dutifulness). The preceding epigram addresses Memor as the "glory of the Roman buskin" and its reference to the "leaves of Jupiter" (*Ep.* 11.9.1) indicates that he had won the prize in the Capitoline Games held in the god's honor, at one of the competitions held late in the reign of Domitian. Drama, indeed, may well have suffered the most ruinous losses of all. On one level that is completely unsurprising, as there was probably always more of it to lose, and much of it was written for ephemeral productions connected with annual festivals or one-off celebrations like triumphs. The loss, however, is particularly to be regretted because of the social and political importance of the theater and its role as a place where the emperor and the ruling classes faced the people in their tens of thousands. We know all too little about the "sub-literary" entertainments that amused and enthralled the people of Rome with their mixture of music, dance, and song. The pantomime libretto *Agave* that Statius sold to the dancer Paris may have been no glorious thing in the eyes of Juvenal (*Sat.* 7.87), and there will have been countless other librettos by poets we cannot even name, but having none of them leaves us in the dark about more than public taste. Such entertainments were often paid for by emperors and magistrates, whose reputation and honor were put on public display in a literally spectacular fashion. When Helvidius, who came from a family with a long history of outspokenness and of crossing emperors, wrote what seems to have been a comic skit for the stage featuring the Trojan prince Paris and his shameless abandonment of his first wife, the nymph Oenone, in favor of Helen of Sparta, Domitian took offense at what he interpreted as sly references to his own estrangement from his wife Domitia (Suet. *Dom.* 10.4). Suetonius' grammar (the explanatory conjunction *quasi* used with the distancing effect of the pluperfect subjunctive) perhaps implies that Domitian was using a pretext, but the story nonetheless reminds us that the real thrills in Flavian literature were not usually to be had from reading Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*. Writing on serious subjects in the loftier kinds of dramatic verse could be just as dangerous, even if the performance was limited to the relatively small audience of a recitation hall rather than a stage. The *Dialogus* opens with Maternus' friends visiting him at home the day after he was said to have ruffled the feathers of some powerful people at what Tacitus characterizes as a public performance of his tragedy *Cato*. A work bearing as its title the name of the most highly revered of the martyrs of the dead Republic must surely have dealt with the always

difficult subject of political freedom and of tyranny (*Dial.* 2.1). *Agave*, *Paris* and *Oenone*, and *Cato* have all vanished, and with them the opportunities they might have afforded us for understanding more about the dangerous dance of licit and illicit speech in an intensely honor-conscious society in which the emperor and the ruling classes sought to maintain the balance of power between them as the people looked on.

In some cases the loss suffered has implications for our understanding of the texts that sit safely on our shelves, but we can at least sense something of what is lost and what use it may have been put to by a surviving author. Our literary histories of the early second century would be all the richer if we could read the hilarious *Fourth Satire* of Juvenal against the whole of Statius' epic on Domitian's German Wars. A scholiast cites a four-line scrap from Statius' *De Bello Germanico* that names several of the same prominent courtiers depicted by Juvenal in their preposterous debate on what to do with a gigantic turbot presented to the emperor during a summer vacation at his Alban villa. This raises the possibility that a satire that seems to mock, among other targets, epic poetry as a genre may in fact have been something closer to a sustained parody of a particular poem, one whose particular significance may have lain in its having won Statius the crown at the annual games held in honor of Domitian's divine patron Minerva at the Alban villa (*Silv.* 3.5.28–31, 5.3.227–9). Without Statius we are almost certainly missing some of the jokes and much of the bile. We are on firmer ground with Quintilian's lost discussion *De Causis Corruptae Eloquentiae*, parts of which the author reworked in the *Institutio Oratoria*, as he freely acknowledges from time to time (*Inst.* 6 pr. 3; 8. 6.76). As its title shows, this must have offered an historical explanation of some kind for the decline in Roman forensic oratory that the *Institutio Oratoria* was designed to halt and reverse, and much of what it will have said finds either an echo or a reply in Vipstanus Messala's long speech on the subject in Tacitus' *Dialogus* (28–35). Despite the heroic work of one learned critic (Brink 1989) in disentangling the evidence, we can never hope to know just how much of *De Causis* has been reproduced in Quintilian's later work, or how much of his account of decline won Tacitus' approval and how much of it he explicitly sought to reject. Of course, it is worth remembering that we are often in a similar position even with the Flavian literature that is preserved more or less intact and for which abundant sources also survive. In his brilliant study of the poem (McNelis 2007, *passim*), Charles McNelis has shown us how we can derive a powerful reading of the *Thebaid* of Statius by setting it in dialogue with the Hellenistic poet Callimachus. And yet Callimachus is fragmentary, and so, although McNelis can tell a more richly detailed story than Brink, still we suspect we must be missing much. And what of the venerable *Thebaid* of Antimachus of Colophon, written some 500 years or so before the Flavian era? His reputation stood high in antiquity, and it is impossible to believe that the author of the Flavian *Thebaid* did not make use of so illustrious a predecessor. All the same, Antimachus lies in ruin far more complete than the damage wrought to Callimachus, and it is no reproach to McNelis to note that Antimachus is mentioned only three times in his index. Nor is the problem limited to the truly great models: we can never know what use, if any, Statius made of the *Thebaid* of Propertius' friend Ponticus (Prop. 1.7) or the missing masterpiece of Roman tragedy, the *Thyestes* of Virgil's friend Varius (Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.98). The general point is worth stressing: all our literary histories, of both individual authors and periods, are far more lacunose than we often tell ourselves, and it is salutary to read out the roster of the losses.

Some lost works are to be regretted because, whether they had any literary merit or not, we do at least have reason to believe they would have been of historical value. That holds for the *De Iudaeis* of Antonius Julianus to which Minucius Felix refers in his *Octavius* (33.4). He is almost certainly the same man as the Marcus Antonius Julianus who was procurator of Judea in 70 (Joseph. *BJ* 6.238), and the observations of anyone closely connected with the administration of that troublesome corner of the empire at that particularly difficult time is likely to have said something that would have been useful to the modern historian. The same is true of the memoirs of Vespasian mentioned by Josephus (*Vit.* 342), and more light would be shone upon the events of 69, and on the struggle between the Vitellians and the Flavians for the control of Rome, if what Martial calls Domitian's "heavenly song of the Capitoline war" (*Capitolini caelestia carmina belli*, *Ep.* 5.5.7) had survived. Similarly, Valerius Flaccus (*Arg.* 1.12–14) seems to be telling us that Domitian composed a poem on the subject of his brother Titus' exploits during the suppression of the Jewish revolt (unless we believe with Penwill 2000, 66 that Valerius is not talking about literature at all but about Domitian's completion of the Arch of Titus). Domitian's treatise on hair care, *De Cura Capillorum*, from which Suetonius (*Dom.* 18) quotes a short sententious extract, might also have been of some interest either to social historians or to those who would like to know more about the mind of one of Rome's most sensitive tyrants. We would of course also benefit from knowing more about those who fell foul of such emperors, and we might reasonably have expected to learn something about the perils of power and resistance to power in the Flavian Age as well as under the last of the Julio-Claudians from Arulenus Rusticus' eulogy, written in Domitian's reign, of Nero's distinguished victim Thrasea Paetus. Nero had demanded Thrasea Paetus' life, as Domitian would later demand that of Rusticus (Suet. *Dom.* 10.3).⁵ Then again, there are the works we hear about for which none but the true aficionado will mourn. Only those few who are moved by the scraps of his poetry quoted by Pliny the Younger in his letters are likely to miss the Latin elegies on the island of Icaria that he tells us he composed on his way back from his military service when he was a lad (*Epist.* 7.4.3), just as only the true specialists will deeply regret that Frontinus' *Gromaticae*, a treatise on the measurement of land, has not survived. Vespasian himself laughed in the faces of those who tried to conjure up for him a lineage that went back to a Flavius supposed to have accompanied the demi-god Hercules on his travels (Suet. *Vesp.* 12): if there were poets or orators or historians among these ingenious flatterers, we might even be thankful that their no doubt elegant silliness has been stifled by the merciful anesthetic of time and decay.

Some of what the handbooks and the encyclopedias declare lost is not so utterly gone as might be suggested by too quick a look at the entry. Suetonius (*Gram.* 24) tells us that Marcus Valerius Probus of Berytus (Beirut) had hoped for an appointment to the rank of centurion, but it never came his way, and he therefore immersed himself in the philological study of the authors of the Republican period. The army's loss was scholarship's gain, and though it seems that Probus more often communicated his opinions and observations in conversation than in writing, Suetonius mentions his *Silva Observationum Sermonis Antiqui*, while Aulus Gellius refers to his *Commentationes* (NA 15.30.5). References to reports of Probus' views are strewn throughout the *Noctes Atticae*, and, even if some of the attributions are now considered doubtful, a proportion of his material has made its way down into the commentators of late antiquity, which means

that it also turns up in the works of their modern successors. A distinguished military career under Corbulo in Armenia, and as governor of first Lycia and then Syria, gave Licinius Mucianus a wide familiarity with the ancient near east to add to his three suffect consulships and his close connection to Vespasian. He wrote what seems to have been a compendium of marvels on which Pliny the Elder drew with grateful frequency for his *Naturalis Historia*, naming him as an authority time and time again in over a dozen books. Since Pliny will have read it for his own limited purposes, we cannot be sure of the precise character of Mucianus' work or even of its title, though Bardon's (1956, 181) suggestions *Itinera* and *Mirabilia* are both attractive. The marvels that caught Mucianus' attention included both the natural and the antiquarian, ranging from a spring in Cyzicus whose water had the power to cure love (Plin. *NH* 31.19) to a letter he had seen in Lycia supposedly sent from Troy by Sarpedon (*NH* 13.88). Pliny himself devotes a couple of sentences to expressing and explaining his skeptical attitude to the letter. Our cynical age can only commend his caution, while acknowledging that the most interesting treasures lost to us may not be the Flavian ones. Although Pliny only quotes from Mucianus once – a rather mechanical but eminently practical list indicating which oysters from which places are the best for which qualities (*NH* 32.62) – there is a personality to be sensed which makes him more real to us than Saleius Bassus can ever be.

Also less ghostly than Bassus is the aristocratic poet Arruntius Stella, friend and patron to both Statius and Martial. Some time around 90 he married the rich, and still young, widow Violentilla, an event celebrated at exuberant length in Statius' *Silvae* 1.2. Martial also offered his tribute on the occasion (*Ep.* 6.21), and in another score of poems addressed to him supplies many details that are often charmingly personal. He was, it seems, a generous host at dinner (*Ep.* 11.52.15), and though he insisted that his guests reciprocate their invitation by offering poetry to season the table talk, he considered himself properly repaid even if the poetry was bad (*Ep.* 9.89). Not that his head was always in the clouds: Martial tells us of the load of roof tiles that Stella gave him as a gift for his little villa at Nomentum (*Ep.* 7.36) and of his successful staging of games in honor of Domitian's triumph (*Ep.* 8.78). Both Martial and Statius speak of the poem he wrote on the death of Violentilla's pet dove (*Ep.* 7.14.3–6; *Silv.* 1.2.102), and Martial explicitly associates it with its likely model, Catullus 3, on the death of Lesbia's famous sparrow. Catullus' poem was in hendecasyllables, and perhaps so too was Stella's. He may, however, have incorporated it into his love elegies for *Asteris*, that being the poetic sobriquet he gives his beloved, no doubt as a compliment to her "star-like" beauty, though it also alludes in Greek to his own name Stella, "star" and thereby suggests that she is his natural mate. Statius and Martial perhaps exaggerate Stella's talent, for he was a man on the way up and a rich patron who could recommend their work to others in high circles (Mart. *Ep.* 12.2.15–6), but we have no clearly identified excerpts or fragments to help us decide properly for ourselves. Statius' epithalamium, however, is drenched in the standard vocabulary of elegy established by Tibullus and Propertius, and evokes such traditional elements of the genre as the song in which the lover laments his sorrows and denounces the hard-heartedness of the beloved who has left him locked outside the door of her house. All that may be broadly conventional, but it puts us on the alert for the possibility that Statius has adapted into his own poem some words or phrases that were taken from Stella's elegies. That is a procedure already familiar to us from Augustan poetry in particular, and our suspicions are strengthened when Statius calls upon the love

poets of the past to help celebrate the marriage after Violentilla has relented and unlocked both her door and her heart. Among those summoned are “Propertius in his Umbrian grotto” and Tibullus “rich in his glowing hearth” (*Silv.* 1.2.253–5), and since the texts of those two poets are not lost we can see for ourselves that Statius’ words clearly allude to one of Propertius’ most prominent poems (3.1.2, 5) and boldly incorporate a sentiment from the opening of the first poem in the elegies of Tibullus, along with some of the very words in which the Augustan poet had expressed it (“Let my poverty give me over to a life of idleness | just so long as my hearth glows with a continual fire”, Tib. 1.1.5–6). It is, then, all the more likely that, just as Virgil seems to have introduced phrases and ideas from the lost elegies of Gallus into the hexameters of the tenth *Eclogue*, Statius may have playfully reworked some of Stella’s own elegiac couplets into the hexameters of his epithalamium. Deciding exactly where he may have done so can only be a kind of scholarly guessing-game, but there may be as much Stella as Statius in, for example, these lines:

et lacrimae vigilesque viri prope limina questus
 Asteris et vatis totam cantata per Urbem,
 Asteris ante dapes, nocte Asteris, Asteris ortu
Silv. 1.2.196–8

And the man’s tears, and his unsleeping complaints at the doorway,
 And the poet’s “Asteris” sung throughout the entire City,
 “Asteris” before dinner, “Asteris” by night, and at daybreak “Asteris”

The catalogue of ruin inevitably prompts us to ask why particular losses occurred and whether certain kinds of literature were less likely than others to escape what Oscar Wilde calls “the hungry teeth of time.” (*Poems* 1881) There can be little doubt that the explanations that apply in all periods are foremost in importance for Flavian authors too. Time calls others to the banquet, not least the boorish mice that Juvenal describes gnawing away at a boxful of Greek books kept in Cordus’ top-floor room in a Roman apartment block (*Sat.* 3.206–7). That building, however, is already on fire, and perhaps Cordus’ Greek library never stood much of a chance. If a work of literature was to survive from antiquity till the arrival of the printing press as more than a quotation or a brief reference in someone else’s writings, then its best chance lay in existing in many copies and in being thought worth copying out again, laboriously and by hand, while the copies that had escaped physical destruction were still legible. The best defenses were stature and utility, as defined first by contemporaries, then by the schoolmasters of late antiquity, and later by the pious abbots of early medieval Europe. Many will have fallen early, brought down by a more general version of the grim law enunciated in the *Dialogus* by Marcus Aper, that few people read good poets and nobody reads the also-rans (*Tac. Dial.* 10.1). Martial recommended the spirited poetry of Sulpicia to a wide audience, and perhaps in her own day she reached it, but supposing for one moment that she could satisfy the schoolmasters, Sulpicia was never very likely to satisfy a high enough proportion of the abbots; the wonder is not that we have lost Sulpicia but that we still have Martial. In the sphragis to his *Thebaid* Statius assures his creation that Fortune has prepared a kindly path through the centuries for her, but when he declares “already the youths of Italy learn and recite you with passion”

(*Theb.* 12.815) we should not leap to the conclusion that he had, in his lifetime, already won a place on the school curriculum. His survival is probably better explained by a combination of stature, luck, and error, with the luck and the error combining in the ease with which his great poem could be read as Christian allegory and in the medieval belief, reflected by Dante, that he had in fact been a secret Christian himself (see CHAPTER 29, RECEPTION OF FLAVIAN LITERATURE, section 1.2). Even so, his stature and respectability could not save his *Agave* or his *De Bello Germanico*. And the *Silvae*, perhaps the most extraordinary surviving literary product of the Flavian era, are preserved for us in a single fifteenth-century manuscript so full of error that the great Humanist scholar Poggio Bracciolini, who had commissioned it, denounced the scribe as “the most ignorant man alive.” Whether the fault lay mainly with the scribe or with a decayed exemplar, any tolerable degree of certainty about what Statius actually wrote is, in all too many places in the *Silvae*, impossible to obtain.

Other factors will have played their part in the disappearance of many authors. Political martyrdom brings glory to some, and Lucan’s *De Bello Civili* has outlasted the emperor who ordered his execution, but official condemnation may nonetheless have helped push a few others down the road to oblivion. Some of the turns of phrase in the histories of Hermogenes of Tarsus enraged Domitian to such a degree that he was not content with executing the author but even had the *librarii* (the scribes, who were probably slaves) nailed to crosses for the crime of making the copies intended for distribution (Suet. *Dom.* 10.1). Those who happened to own a copy could be forgiven for discreetly consigning it to the nearest fire. Others were perhaps unfortunate enough to find themselves superseded, as Mucianus may have been by his friend Pliny the Elder, or even the great Turnus by Juvenal. And some may simply never have achieved a wide enough circulation to survive, unless we happen to hear of them in the pages of the more successful. Spare a thought for Julius Cerealis, of whose *Gigantomachy*, as well as of his presumably didactic poem on the countryside, we only know because he was a friend of Martial (11.52).

Two kinds of literature were particularly vulnerable. One was occasional poetry of all kinds, such as that written in celebration of the birthdays or weddings of patrons, in honor of their political and military successes, or in memory of those they mourned. We are lucky indeed in having not only the poem written by Statius for the festival that Lucan’s widow, Polla, celebrated on the anniversary of his birthday (*Silv.* 2.7) but also three much shorter ones by Martial (7.21–3). Assuming Polla celebrated the occasion year after year, however, there will have been many other such poems on the same subject by poets of whom we now can know nothing at all; and Rome was full of rich families with birthdays and marriages to celebrate. Such poetry may even have been the commonest literary currency of the time, but little of it will have held much interest for anyone but the recipients and their households and it is hard to imagine that it was often of the very highest quality. Similarly ephemeral were the speeches and poetry produced in vast quantities for the competitions held at the various games. As a rule, perhaps only the victors had much right to expect to be remembered in any case, but it seems that it was only their names and prizes that the priests recorded. The proud but grieving parents of Quintus Sulpicius Maximus, a boy wonder of 11 years who competed in the Greek poetry contest at the third celebration of Domitian’s Capitoline Games in 94, must have gone to considerable expense when they had his unsuccessful entry inscribed on his tombstone. There were 51 other competitors, as the inscription tells us, and of those it

is a fair bet that the 50 who were similarly unsuccessful never sought to memorialize their failure in stone. Nor do we know who won, and if he did advertise his success, it has not come down to us. Some poets we are more familiar with are attested as taking part in the Capitoline Games, either successfully, such as Scaevus Memor, mentioned earlier in this chapter, and Collinus (Mart. *Ep.* 4.54) in Latin poetry, or unsuccessfully, as in the case of Statius, as he himself laments (*Silv.* 3.5.31–3). We also hear of the young poet Annius Florus from Africa. He won over the crowd but not Domitian, who denied him the prize on the grounds that it was not right that the crown of Jupiter should fall to an African; the idea was no doubt that it would be a terrible omen if the god's crown came into the possession of anyone from the land of Hannibal, but jealousy on Domitian's part seems a more likely motive in the eyes of many (Jones 1996, 42). Florus, however, was luckier than Sulpicius Maximus, as he is almost certainly the poet of the same name who survived into adulthood and won distinction in the reign of Hadrian. Fragments of the comic banter he exchanged with the emperor in verse are preserved at SHA *Hadr.* 16.3–4 (Courtney 1993, 375–6, 381). There were also the games that Domitian held annually at his Alban villa in honor of Minerva and the more venerable competitions of the Sebasta, the games held every four years in Naples in honor of the Divine Augustus, at both of which Statius had better luck (*Silv.* 3.5.28–31, 5.3.225–7). And many a city up and down Italy, to say nothing of Greece and the east, held similar contests at similar games on a smaller scale. There will, in short, have been hundreds of contestants and many hundreds of entries, in Greek and Latin poetry and oratory, which were heard once by an audience of thousands and read in later years by almost nobody. We can barely guess at their quality and character.

As we saw earlier in this chapter, similarly vulnerable was drama of all kinds, which had to contend not only with the ephemerality that often accompanied work written for performance but also with the hostility of the Church to the public spectacles it associated with vice and pagan worship. We have lost the tragedies of Scaevus Memor and the *Cato* and *Medea* of Maternus, to name only the most obvious and celebrated examples of the Flavian period, and have already noted the loss of Statius' *Agave* and Helvidius Priscus' skit on the story of Paris and Oenone: innumerable other comic and musical works have left no trace at all. Even so, we are almost certainly luckier than those considering the last century of the Republic or the reign of Augustus. Attached to the corpus of Seneca's tragedies is *Octavia*, the sole surviving example of a *praetexta*, a tragedy on a Roman historical theme. It features Seneca as a character, but cannot be his work, not least because its style is so different from that of the plays that are genuinely his. In addition, the character of Agrippina's ghost knows enough to prophesy with a fair degree of accuracy the death of Nero, which surely dates the play to 68 or later (*Oct.* 629–31). It could in principle belong to the time of Nerva or Trajan, no doubt, but its style and its treatment of Nero as a tyrant fit in well with what we know of Flavian literature and ideology.

2 Greek literature

If the losses in Latin literature are immense, those on the Greek side are likely to have been larger still. And yet, as a distinguished historian of the Second Sophistic points out, “there is only a handful of extant works in Greek that can even be ascribed to the Flavian

era” (Jones 2005, 201). Calculating the losses is therefore all the harder. Perhaps the list would include some of the lost biographies of Plutarch. The lethal history of Hermogenes of Tarsus was no doubt written in Greek. The epigrams of Nicarchus that we find in the *Greek Anthology* are sometimes thought to be Flavian: to raise the question of their dating and of their place in that collection reminds us that epigrams were surely composed in both languages in vast numbers and that many possessing real merit must have failed to find safety in any such shelter. The style of the fragments of the romantic novel *Metiochus and Parthenope* is generally considered close to that of Chariton, who in his turn is sometimes thought to have written in the first century (Stephens and Winkler, 1995, 80). If neither can truly be declared Flavian with any justifiable confidence, their fortunate preservation nonetheless hints at the likelihood of our having lost much of a genre that was just coming into its own. The carnage among Greek texts extends to Romans whom we know well, but not even Pliny the Younger himself seems to lament the Greek tragedy he informs us he wrote at the age of 14 (*Epist.* 7.4.2). Statius seems to be telling us that his rich Campanian friend Pollius Felix wrote Epicurean didactic poetry, as well as elegies and invective iambics (*Silv.* 2.2.112–5), and the general Hellenic atmosphere that pervades the poem perhaps suggests that these now vanished works were not written in Latin. Statius also addresses Domitian as one who combined the laurels of the generals with those of the bards and thereby won the admiration of the youth of Italy and Greece alike, which implies that some of his lost poetry was in Greek (*Achil.* 1. 14–6).⁶ Lastly, it is to Statius that we owe our knowledge of the life and career of his own father, a distinguished *grammaticus* (teacher of literature) specializing in the Greek poets and himself a poet and orator who had won crowns both at the Sebasta in Naples and at the more ancient great festivals of mainland Greece (*Silv.* 5.3.134–45). All of the elder Statius’ winning compositions, which probably included entries for oratory as well as for verse, are likely to have been in Greek (Hardie 1983, 6–7). Greek, no doubt, was also the language in which he wrote his account of the fighting on the Capitol and the burning of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in “the Year of the Four Emperors” and in which he planned, shortly before his death, to write his lamentation for the damage wrought by the eruption of Vesuvius (*Silv.* 5.3.195–208). Still, even the register of known losses seems astonishingly meager, and the historians of Roman literature are for once in a much stronger position than their Hellenist colleagues.

Conclusion

The lucky survival of *Octavia* reminds us of how the vagaries of transmission can upset all generalizations. So winding are the paths by which our texts come down to us that some small part of the damage can perhaps even be undone, if we are ingenious enough. We thought we only had two mangled lines of Turnus until 1979 when Vincenzo Tandoi reminded the world that, while most of the manuscripts of Servius gave *nocturnis* in his note on Virgil, *Georgics* 3.325, a few had versions of what looked like the satirist’s name. And so a third line was reclaimed from the darkness, and appropriately enough was found to describe the dawn: “and the grass shining with the dews of morning.” Then again, though pretty, it lacks the bite we expect of satire. As Tandoi makes clear, however, he was only drawing attention to what Pieter Burman had said more than two

centuries before in the polemical notes to his edition of Virgil (Tandoi 1979, 801) and had been forgotten in the meantime. It is a sobering thought: what was lost was found, only to be forgotten and found all over again. Some editors seek to do similar service to Turnus' brother Scaevus Memor, and, by correcting just one letter in the word "Memos" found in some of the manuscripts of Fulgentius (*Expositio Sermonum Antiquorum* 25), return a four-word fragment of a *Hercules* to its true author. Sometimes, on the other hand, the critics are ruthless. The manuscripts of the *Dialogus* offer *in nerone* and *in neronem* at 11. 2. Müller sought to replace all this with *imperante Nerone*, "when Nero was emperor," robbing Maternus' glory of an otherwise unknown *praetexta* named *Nero* that would perhaps have nicely complemented *Octavia* (see Bardon 1956; Winterbottom and Ogilvie 1975, 74). Bardon mounts a vigorous defense (Bardon 1956, 215), and the conjecture is not a very convincing one either in sense or in paleographical terms. Even so, the very existence of the play hangs on the slenderest of threads.

Happily, sometimes evidence turns up even today that possesses a welcome solidity. In 2004, work on the tunnels for extensions to the subway at Naples uncovered the ruins of a temple that was almost certainly consecrated to the imperial cult. Close by are the remains of another building thought to be a gymnasium, and attached to which was a portico. The inner wall of the portico was once lined with marble panels bearing long and detailed inscriptions. The task of recovering and reassembling the hundreds of fragments has not yet been completed, but when they are finally published in full we shall be able to read the names of dozens of the victors at the Sebasta, the games held there in honor of Augustus, in both athletic and musical competitions. These are the games at which both Statius and his father once won crowns for their poetry, and we now know that they were keeping the most distinguished company. Among the recovered names already disclosed in print stands that of Domitian, who won for compositions in praise of his deified brother Titus, compositions of which we previously knew nothing at all (Miranda 2010, 420). Suetonius claims that Domitian plotted against Titus when he was alive and, apart from ratifying his deification, showed him no honor after his death, choosing even to denigrate him in his speeches and edicts (*Dom.* 2.3). Suetonius' portrayal of Domitian, however, is consistently hostile (Jones 1996, xv, 27–8). Truth, the daughter of Time, has vindicated the emperor's *pietas* towards his brother, and thereby exposed the error, or the malice, of his biographer.

NOTES

- 1 The surviving fragment of Sulpicia (Courtney 1993, 361) is in the form of a conditional clause, but the lack of a context makes its grammar uncertain. It means roughly "if, when the thongs for the mattress have been repaired, it (*sc.* the bed) should show me forth, naked, lying with Calenus".
- 2 Similarly, Pliny the Younger's list also notes his uncle's *Studiosus* in three books, "in which he trains the orator from his cradle" (*Epist.* 3.5.5). That comes between the *Bella Germaniae* and the eight books of the *Dubius Sermo*, a work on linguistic usage said to have been written in the closing years of the reign of Nero (*Epist.* 3.5.5). The late-Claudianic or Neronian *Studiosus* is an acknowledged source of Quintilian's unimpeachably Flavian *Institutio Oratoria* (3.1.21; 11.3.143, 148).
- 3 Quintilian's reference to his "youthful desire for glory" perhaps implies that in his wiser years he regretted having made such a piece of his juvenilia available to the public. He was certainly

- careful of his reputation, and firmly disowns two books circulating under his name with the title *Ars Rhetorica*. The contents of these were culled from his lectures, he explains, by pupils who did not have his permission to publish them (*Inst.* pr. 7).
- 4 As transmitted by the scholiast on Juvenal 1. 71, the fragment of Turnus (Courtney 1993, 362) refers to Lucusta as “famous,” associates her intimately with Nero, and identifies her as the killer of “the offspring of the Caesars.” The reference is no doubt to the part she played in the assassinations of Claudius and his son Britannicus (Tac. *Ann.* 12.66, 13.15; Suet. *Ner.* 33.2).
 - 5 Suetonius (*Dom.* 10. 3) also attributes to Rusticus a eulogy of Helvidius Priscus, but this could very well be an error, as our other sources name Herennius Senecio as its author (Jones 1996, 92). For the long history of writing such pamphlets in the late Republic and early Empire, and for their probable importance for Tacitus in the composition of *Agricola*, see MacMullen 1992, 79–81.
 - 6 A facility for composition in both Greek and Latin, in the form of speeches and poetry alike, is similarly attributed by Suetonius to Domitian’s brother Titus (*Tit.* 3.2). Suetonius’ praise is echoed in still more lavish terms by Pliny the Elder in the preface in which he dedicates his *Naturalis Historia* to the young prince (*NH* pr. 5): the claim made there that Titus had devised a way of imitating his brother can be read as showing that Domitian in fact enjoyed the higher reputation. Pliny also mentions the “very famous poem” that Titus had written on the appearance of a comet (*NH* 2.89). He does not make it clear which language the poem was written in, but dates it (and therefore probably, but not certainly, the comet) to Titus’ fifth consulship (the year 76).

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FURTHER READING

The most thorough account of the lost literature of the Flavian Age remains the second volume of Henry Bardon's monumental two-volume *La littérature latine inconnue* (1952–1956), namely the fourth chapter, "Des Flaviens aux Sévères" (*Tome II. L'Epoque Impériale* (1956) 177–241). Given how exiguous our knowledge is of some lost works and authors, in a few places the present chapter of necessity can do little more than repeat the same scanty facts and names, but readers will note Bardon's relative lack of interest in occasional poetry in particular as well as the different emphasis that comes from erasing the boundary between the Flavians and the age of Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian. The implications of one work we know we have lost for what we still possess are brought out well by C.O. Brink in his painstaking 1989 article "Quintilian's *De Causis Corruptae Eloquentiae* and Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus*." The interconnections between individual authors writing in the same period in a variety of genres, and their relationship with an emperor who had a particular interest in literature but whose work is almost entirely lost, are traced by J.L. Penwill in "Quintilian, Statius, and the Lost Epic of Domitian" (2000). The fragments of Sulpicia and Turnus are discussed by Edward Courtney in *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (1993). From our point of view A.S. Hollis, *Fragments of Roman Poetry c. 60 BC – AD 20* (2007) stops regrettably early, but many of the same kinds of problems are engagingly illustrated and many of the same kinds of possible solutions systematically explored.

PART VI

Reception

CHAPTER 27

The Flavian Legacy

Andrew Zissos

Introduction

The significance of the Flavian Age for subsequent cultural and historical developments is out of all proportion to its brief temporal span. Its reception is a complex matter that is best approached from a number of angles. This chapter, the first of three, will tackle in broad terms some of the ways in which the Flavian dynasty, its actions and the monuments it erected have resonated in subsequent eras. The following chapters will address, respectively, Vesuvius and Pompeii, and the reception of Flavian literature. For later periods the Flavian Age was marked above all by two cataclysmic events that have resonated through the centuries: the destruction of Pompeii and neighboring towns caused by the eruption of Vesuvius, and the sacking of Jerusalem. The latter has proven to be the single most important event in shaping the Flavian legacy; it will be a recurring point of reference in this chapter.

1 The dynasty through the ages

On September 18, 96 Domitian was murdered by a palace conspiracy involving some of those closest to him. The news was met with a mixture of jubilation and relief among the Roman aristocracy. Domitian was immediately subjected to *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory) by the senate. This was a rare official act – as opposed to, for example, the “unofficial” *damnatio* that had been carried out on Nero. After less than three decades, the dynasty that had salvaged Rome and its empire, that had transformed the monumental landscape of the capital, came to an abrupt and inglorious end.

In the wake of Domitian’s death, writers like the epigrammist Martial, who had praised the last Flavian while he lived, promptly “turned”; those who had been silent, now spoke out (see CHAPTER 9, THE FLAVIANS AND THE SENATE, sections 1, 3.1). In the preface of his *Histories* Tacitus declares that Rome has found its way to happier times “when one may think as one pleases and express what one thinks” (*ubi sentire quae velis*

et quae sentias dicere licet, *Hist.* 1.3). Literature thus responded with alacrity to the new post-Flavian political configuration. Juvenal devoted an entire *Satire* to Domitian, famously styling him a “bald Nero” (*calvo ... Neroni*, *Sat.* 4.38) – a pointed insult for a member of the dynasty that had carefully crafted its image against that of Nero, presenting itself as an “antidote” to the last of the Julio-Claudians. This damning association with Nero was also made by Pliny the Younger (*Pan.* 53.4), and Tacitus (*Agr.* 45.2). And the analogy would endure: in his *Breviarium Historiae Romanae*, the fourth-century Roman historian Eutropius reaffirms the judgment: *Domitianus ... Neroni aut Caligulae aut Tiberio similior quam patri vel fratri suo* (Domitian was more like Nero or Caligula or Tiberius than his own father or brother, 7.23). It became conventional to note a kind of caesura between the reigns of Vespasian and Titus on the one hand, and that of Domitian on the other. Even Nerva, Domitian’s immediate successor, did not deem it inappropriate to associate himself with the first two Flavians (see CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 1.4).

As the traumatic effects of Domitian’s reign became a more distant memory, the dynasty as a whole regained its luster. The passage of time made possible a more appreciative view of the Flavians’ achievements, with Domitian – and the negative associations of his reign – figuring less prominently in conceptions of the period. Indeed, for later ages it would be Vespasian and Titus who would emblemize the dynasty, with Domitian often relegated to the status of an unpleasant afterthought (a tendency that the *damnatio memoriae* no doubt facilitated).

The first two Flavians, of course, had enjoyed a largely favorable press. Tacitus famously remarked that Vespasian was unique in improving *after* becoming emperor: *solus... omnium ante se principum in melius mutatus est* (he, unlike any of his predecessors, changed for the better with power,” *Hist.* 1.50), a verdict that proved influential. No less memorable is Suetonius’ characterization of Titus as *amor et deliciae humani generis* (“the delight and darling of the human race,” *Tit.* 1). The suspicion of historians like Cassius Dio (66.18) that Titus’ glowing reputation was a product of the brevity of his reign has gained little purchase in subsequent periods.

1.1 *Later antiquity*

The high esteem in which the Flavians were generally held by Romans in later antiquity is illustrated by the efforts of two renowned emperors, Claudius Gothicus and Constantine the Great, to associate themselves with the earlier dynasty. Claudius (213–270, r. 268–70) was one of the rugged soldier emperors who contributed to restoring order in the empire and bringing to an end the “crisis of the third century.” In 268 he won a major battle against the Goths at Naissus (whence the *cognomen* “Gothicus”), regarded as one of the greatest victories in Roman military history; the same year he also gained an important victory against the Alemanni at Lake Bonnaeus. When his life and reign were cut short by illness (probably a plague), he was promptly deified by the senate as Divus Claudius Gothicus. A noteworthy feature of Claudius’ brief reign is the “reverential devotion” it showed to the Flavian dynasty (Strong 1907, 135–7). Claudius restored and probably enlarged the *Templum gentis Flaviae* (Temple of the Flavian Gens), which had been built by Domitian on the Quirinal, on the site of the house belonging to Vespasian.

This much can be gathered from a passage in the *Historia Augusta*, discussing Claudius' supposed connection with the house of Constantine:

ille [sc. Claudius Gothicus] *velut futurorum memor, gentes Flavias quae < Vespasiani> et Titi, nolo autem dicere Domitiani fuerant, propagavit.*

SHA *Claud.* 3.6

As if mindful of future events, he extended the [temple of the] Flavian gens, that is, [the temple in honor] of Vespasian, of Titus and, I don't want to say, of Domitian.

Claudius' appropriation for his own purposes of a central Flavian monument was clearly part of an attempt to associate himself with the earlier dynasty. How much further this would have gone is impossible to say, given the brevity of his reign and the paucity of evidence (the just-cited passage is the only surviving reference to Claudius' nascent building program). It may be that Claudius affected to trace his descent from the Flavians: he is referred to as *Flavius Claudius* in his biography (SHA *Claud.* 7.8), as well as in a spurious letter inserted in the Life of Aurelian (SHA *Aurel.* 17.2). But this nomenclature is not confirmed by inscriptions, so that, as Strong (1907, 137) argues, the genealogical connection is probably a fiction propagated by the court historians of the Constantinian period in order to support the official legend regarding the descent of that dynasty.

That Constantine the Great (r. 306–337) fashioned himself as a latter-day Flavian is a fact that has attracted relatively little scholarly attention. Constantine's image-making was complex, to be sure, involving a wide range of associations that resonated differently with different constituencies (Leithart 2010, 75). But he clearly regarded the Flavians as illustrious imperial predecessors worthy of emulation, and indeed went so far as to fashion himself as founder of the "Second Flavian Dynasty." Emerging from the turmoil of the later third century CE, and rejecting Diocletian's tetrarchy as a scheme of government, Constantine was resolved to establish a properly dynastic rule. Upon his ascension he inventively proclaimed himself grandnephew of the deified Claudius Gothicus (tracing his descent to a fictitious cousin of the latter) in order to bolster his perceived imperial legitimacy (Strong 1907, 135–7). The supposed ancestral connection of Claudius to the Flavians – whether an invention of Claudius or of Constantine himself – enabled Constantine to proclaim the advent of a new Flavian dynasty, signified by the name "Flavius" (his full appellation was: Caesar Flavius Valerius Constantinus Augustus). To be effective, this dynastic evocation would have to have been recognizable, as well as freighted with broadly positive associations in popular consciousness. Leithart (2010, 75) suggests in particular that "the Flavian title was calculated to endear [Constantine] to the capital, which was dotted with monuments from the earlier dynasty – the Temple of Peace, the Arch and Baths of Titus, and of course the Colosseum itself." Constantine's various architectural interventions in the Colosseum Valley "ensured that from any vantage point, one was confronted with evidence of the emperor's urban benefactions [as well as] his ancestral ties to the first-century Flavians ..." (Marlowe 2006, 237). So for example, Constantine's own triumphal arch, erected beside the Flavian Amphitheater, is carefully aligned with, as well as in dialogue with, the Arch of Titus (Leithart 2010, 75).

Evidently the Flavian dynasty as a whole and Vespasian in particular constituted a meaningful model for Constantine: like his predecessor, he had emerged as victor from

the chaos of civil war, and sought to restore peace, confidence, and prosperity to the empire by founding a new dynasty and securing the peaceful succession of his sons (each of whom was given the designation “Caesar”). It was no doubt important that Vespasian had come closer to establishing a hereditary dynasty than any of his predecessors or successors through to Constantine’s day. That Flavian associations were maintained by Constantine throughout his reign is demonstrated, *inter alia*, by inscriptions from the town of Hispellum (modern Spello in Umbria). In the mid 330s the people of Hispellum sought and obtained permission from Constantine to construct a *templum gentis Flaviae* (*CIL* 11.5625), that is, a new temple to honor the emperor’s (Second) Flavian dynasty, as well as to establish a new festival that included theatrical shows and games. They also asked that he bestow upon the city a name derived from his dynastic name. Constantine acceded to their requests, allowing the city to be renamed Flavia Constans, thereby commemorating both his family’s dynastic Flavian name, and the name of his youngest son (Van Dam 2011, 188). That there was a *pontifex gentis Flaviae* at Hispellum is also attested (*CIL* 10.5283), evidently corresponding to the *pontifices Flaviales* at Rome (*CIL* 6.1690, 1691).

As observed earlier in this chapter, the most important and enduring element of the Flavian legacy arises from the successful prosecution of the Judean War by armies under the command of Vespasian and Titus, and the sacking of Jerusalem in particular – themes that were celebrated by their monumental program in Rome. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple, which was both the operational center and supreme symbol of Jewish religion, was a crushing blow for Jews throughout the empire (see CHAPTER 13, FLAVIAN JUDEA, section 4); it is still commemorated annually as a day of mourning in the Jewish calendar. From the early Christian perspective, by contrast, the fall of Jerusalem was a welcome event and the surpassing achievement of the first two Flavian emperors. Their conquest of Judea was quickly linked in Christian thought to Christ’s betrayal by the Jews and his warnings to them (Matthew 24.1–2; cf. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.7). On this view the sack of Jerusalem, the destruction of the Temple, and the dispersal and enslavement of the conquered people were punishment for the death of Christ. In the fourth century Eusebius, author of the earliest extant history of the Christian church, the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, lent his authority to this view, as did Orosius in his influential *Historiae Adversus Paganos* (7.3.8, 9.9), composed around 416–417. For early Christian chroniclers it sufficed to represent Vespasian and Titus as unconscious instruments of divine vengeance (Herbert 1905, vi). In the medieval period, as will be seen in the next section, the Christian legends would become more fantastic, with Vespasian and Titus undergoing miraculous religious conversions.

Though broadly favorable towards his father and brother, the Christian tradition vilified Domitian, who came to be portrayed as the second persecutor, after Nero, of the early Church. This characterization persisted through the medieval period and beyond, despite a lack of solid evidence (on the uncertainty regarding Domitian’s Christian prosecutions, see CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, section 4). An important early authority for this tradition was Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.17); he makes Domitian broadly responsible for persecution and banishment of Christians in the latter part of his reign, but reports few specific measures. Nevertheless, as Jones (1992, 115) puts it, “the legend then grew apace.” To some Christian commentators, indeed, Domitian came to be seen as more vicious than Nero. Despite the want of evidence, this tradition persisted,

reaching its most developed articulation 1500 years later in the writings of Cardinal Caesar Baronius who in his *Annales Ecclesiastici* was the first to link Domitian's execution of Flavius Clemens to a general persecution of the church (Jones 1992, 116).

1.2 Middle Ages

The destruction of Jerusalem was an event of overpowering significance in the medieval European imagination; hence Flavian reception in that period is almost exclusively tied to that theme. The sacking of Jerusalem, regarded as God's act of vengeance upon the Jews for the death of His Son, was an immensely popular literary theme in Western Europe throughout the Middle Ages. The role of Vespasian and Titus as avengers of Christ, already established in antiquity, was now imaginatively, even fantastically, developed. The historical basis for these tales was the contemporary record of Josephus (*BJ* 2.9–22), which had been used by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 1.5–3.10) and other church historians, and had long since become “part of the common fund of knowledge among Christian writers” (Herbert 1905, vi). Indeed, Josephus himself, as both protagonist and chronicler, frequently appears in medieval accounts. In the English poem *Titus and Vespasian*, perhaps datable to the early fourteenth century (Herbert 1905, xliii), he prophesies the fall of Jerusalem to the Jews early in the narrative, serves as an advisor to Vespasian, is miraculously healed from a battle wound at Jerusalem, and finally reveals himself to be a Christian convert (3588–606).

As adumbrated earlier in this chapter, it was in the medieval period that fantastic legendary variants were consolidated that made Vespasian and Titus properly Christian heroes: the tales associated with them came to be interwoven with the legend of Veronica, a pious woman of Jerusalem in the first century CE later an important Catholic saint, whose veil, which was said to have wiped the forehead of Jesus as he bore the cross, was endowed with miraculous healing powers. The merging of the legendary strands produced a version whereby Vespasian or Titus or both were afflicted with illness, which was miraculously cured by the Veil of Veronica prior to the Judean campaign. This miracle prompted the Flavians to become Christian converts, thereby transforming them into conscious and willing agents of divine vengeance against the Jews (Herbert 1905, vi). Medieval belief in the conversion of Vespasian and Titus to Christianity was surprisingly widespread. It is seen, for example in the later *Mirabilia*, many of which state that the bodies of Vespasian and Titus were resting in the monastery of San Saba: this, as Graf (1882, 366–7) points out, proves that they were widely believed to have been Christians.

The apocryphal Christian legends became quite elaborate, often involving not just Veronica but the emperor Tiberius (whose status as emperor during Christ's passion had given rise to its own legendary cycle, from which the Flavian tales borrowed elements). One account, the *Vindicta Salvatoris*, perhaps dating to the eighth century (Graf 1882, 391; Herbert 1905, xii), has Titus an official in Africa in the reign of Tiberius, afflicted by a debilitating illness. Hearing of Christ's demise, he laments that his illness prevents him from avenging it. He is immediately and miraculously healed; he undergoes baptism and, along with Vespasian – in this tale his brother rather than father – raises an army and attacks Jerusalem. Upon taking the city they find St Veronica, whom they rescue, and also Pontius Pilate, whom they incarcerate. When the news of Titus and

Vespasian's deeds reaches Tiberius, he too is miraculously healed of a debilitating illness and undergoes baptism.

A Latin prose account, perhaps dating to the eleventh century, the *De Pylato*, while focused on the titular character Pontius Pilate, includes the essential elements of the fully developed Titus–Vespasian legend. Many later versions probably derive from this Latin prose text, including *La Destruction de Jerusalem ou Le livre de Titus et Vespasianus*, a French *chanson de geste* of about 2300 lines, probably composed towards the end of the twelfth century, the *Legenda Aurea*, a compilation made of various legends by Jacobus de Voragine in the latter half of the thirteenth century, and a group of prose versions, in French, Catalan, Provençal, Spanish and Portuguese, perhaps dating to the early thirteenth century (Herbert 1905, xlv).

Titus' medieval renown as Christian avenger against the Jews earned him a place of honor in Dante's *Divina Commedia*, which refers to the destruction of Jerusalem on numerous occasions. Dante refers to its destroyer as [*il*] *buon Tito* ("the good Titus"), with the adjective *buon* speaking to Titus' role as mortal agent of God's will:

Nel tempo che l' buon Tito con l'aiuto
Del summo rege vendicò le fora
Ond' uscì il sangue per Juda venduto
Dante, *Purgat.* 21.82–4

In the time when the good Titus, with the help of the highest king, avenged the wounds
from which flowed the blood sold by Judas.

Poscia con Tito a far vendetta corse
Della vendetta del peccato antiquo.
Dante, *Parad.* 6.92–3

Thereafter it sped with Titus to avenge the vengeance taken for the ancient sin.

The theme of Jewish guilt, alluded to here, is treated more explicitly at *Parad.* 7.47, where Dante underscores the wickedness of that people both for bringing about the death of Christ and for deriving satisfaction from it.

It is perhaps unsurprising that Titus, as the actual conqueror of Jerusalem, features more prominently than his father in the medieval tradition. The particular renown of Titus is manifest in the titlature of many works that invert the natural order of father and son, including the English poem *Titus and Vespasian*, discussed above. This is explained in a fifteenth-century prose commentary on Godfrey of Viterbo's *Speculum Regum*: *Et quamvis [Titus] filius sit Vespasiani et successor eius in imperio, ante patrem tamen nominatur propter suas excellentes virtutes. Unde dicimus: "Titus et Vespasianus", et non: "Vespasianus et Titus"* (Although Titus is the son of Vespasian and his imperial successor, we nonetheless name him first because of his great virtues; thus we say "Titus and Vespasian" rather than "Vespasian and Titus", on 2.2).

In contrast to his glowing reputation in the Roman and Christian traditions, Titus is, unsurprisingly, vilified in Jewish memory. Whereas most emperors "lacked a distinct personality in the rabbinic imagination," Titus was seen as "the archetype of evil" (Goodman 2007, 479). The Jewish tradition, like the Christian, saw divine vengeance at work, but exchanged effect for cause, so that the destruction of Jerusalem and the

Second Temple was the provocation, rather than the fulfillment, of divine wrath, and resulted in Titus' death from sudden illness only two years after his ascension (Griffin 2000, 54). An extensive folklore developed around this idea; Edersheim (1856, 31) offers a traditional account of Titus' ceaseless torment after his return to Italy:

... no sooner had Titus landed, than he felt excruciating pains in his head, occasioned, as it afterwards turned out, by an insect gnawing on his brain, which, according to the Divine threatening, was to continue [to torment him for the remainder of his life]. Only once, and for a short time, the noise from a blacksmith's shop caused the insect to desist. On his death-bed, Titus ordered the physicians, after his decease, to open his skull, in order to ascertain the occasion of this ceaseless agony. To their astonishment they discovered in it an animal, which had grown to the size of a swallow, two talents in weight, with metal bill and claws, which had gnawed at the emperor's brain.

Of course Titus' death in September, 81 at the age of only 41, along with the reports of his illness and apparent depression in the period before his death (see CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 6) helped lend an air of plausibility to such accounts.

1.3 *Renaissance to the present*

The medieval Christian legends of Vespasian and Titus still enjoyed a lingering popularity after the waning of the Middle Ages. Levick (1999, 1) mentions a Portuguese romance, *Estoria do muy nobre Vespesiano emperador de Roma*, printed in Lisbon in 1483, with a plotline similar to its predecessors mentioned in the previous section, but ending climactically with Vespasian converting the entire Roman empire to Christianity. This was evidently a popular work: editions in translation were published in Seville (1499), London (1507), Lyons (1517), and Amsterdam (1664).

Among the numerous depictions of the sacking of Jerusalem in the visual arts, Wilhelm von Kaulbach's painting *Die Zerstörung Jerusalems durch Titus* (*The Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus*, 1846), now housed in the Neue Pinakothek, Munich, attests to the persistence of the medieval Christian tradition (see Fig. 27.1). This allegorical work combines the natural and the supernatural on a massive canvas to express Kaulbach's interpretation, fully congruent with the ancient and medieval Christian traditions, of the destruction of Jerusalem as divine punishment visited upon the Jews, as well as a fulfillment of prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments. The composition is dramatically centered about the figure of the high priest; on either side are groups of men and women and children, racked with anguish and despair. Titus is featured riding triumphantly over the ruins of Jerusalem; avenging angels descend from the sky to assist his work of devastation. Other angels, already on the ground, lead the Christians to safety. Over the ruins of the buildings and the crowds in the foreground, the artist has represented the five prophets who had foretold the destruction of the city. Finally, in the lower left-hand corner of the composition, Kaulbach has introduced the figure of the Wandering Jew, who is vigorously driven out of the frame by three demons.

Such instances of continuity, however, do not represent the broader trend. As Christianity's hold on European civilization began to loosen, Western perspectives on the sacking of Jerusalem gradually shed their triumphalist tone and became more attuned



Fig. 27.1 Wilhelm von Kaulbach, *The Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus*. 1846. Oil on canvas, 585 × 705 cm. Neue Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich, WAF 403. Photograph courtesy of bpk, Berlin/Art Resource, New York, ART380125

to the immense human suffering it entailed. Already the seventeenth-century French painter Nicolas Poussin had sought a more ambivalent effect in his classical masterpiece *The Destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem* (1638), now housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. In this work (see Fig. 27.2), one of the artist's most insistently "historical" compositions, Poussin draws carefully upon Josephus' eyewitness account of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem (*BJ* 6.4); he "reconstructs with impeccable antiquarian knowledge the event and the setting" (Batschmann 1999, 68). Indeed, Poussin's composition relies on the viewer's familiarity with Josephus' *Jewish War*, which was available in several French editions in the seventeenth century (Olson 2002, 64). Poussin creates a chaotic battle scene, with the carnage and brutality of the moment vividly conveyed. The composition is divided between the image of the Temple in the background and the martial activity in the foreground, the latter dominated by the striking figure of Titus on a white horse. Consistent with Josephus' assertion that Titus was minded to spare the Temple, Poussin represents him as distraught at its incipient destruction. In the space between Titus and a row of Jewish prisoners are seen the foreshortened figure of a dead Jew, several severed heads, a headless body, along with lost helmets and



Fig. 27.2 Nicolas Poussin, *The Destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem*. 1638. Oil on canvas, 148 × 199 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria. Photograph courtesy of Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York, ART11423

other debris. Some of Titus' troops have evidently busied themselves with the execution of captured prisoners; they have now paused, and look in the direction of their newly arrived commander, awaiting his orders. In the background, the Temple is burning, and the pillage has begun: Roman soldiers bring forth treasures, including the Menorah (for which Poussin's inspiration was the Arch of Titus: see section 2.2 of this chapter).

In the modern era, the destruction of Jerusalem, rather than representing his greatest triumph, has sometimes weighed against Titus. So Victor Hugo sententiously declared:

Babylone violée diminue Alexandre; Rome enchaînée diminue César; Jérusalem tuée diminue Titus. La tyrannie suit le tyran. C'est un malheur pour un homme de laisser derrière lui de la nuit qui a sa forme.

Hugo, *Les Misérables* vol. 2, bk.1, ch. 4

Violated Babylon diminishes Alexander; enslaved Rome diminishes Caesar; massacred Jerusalem diminishes Titus. Tyranny follows the tyrant. Woe to the man who leaves behind a shadow that bears his form.

At the same time, Western literature gradually shed the medieval fixation on the destruction of Jerusalem, shifting its interest to other aspects of the careers of the Flavians. In the seventeenth century, the figure of Titus as scourge of the Jews yielded pride of place

to Titus the lover of the Jewish queen Berenice. Indeed, from this period onwards, Titus' ill-starred love affair with Berenice has been a favorite literary subject.

In the Jewish tradition, Berenice has fared little better than Josephus, widely regarded as a traitor to his nation. In the West as well, she emerged from antiquity with a rather negative press. Ancient historians on the whole treat her as "little more than a high-born mistress for Titus" (Bell 1936, 29). Cassius Dio reports that Berenice "expected to be married to Titus, and behaved in all respects as his wife" (66.15) during her first sojourn in Rome. Sent away on account of popular consternation on this first occasion, she returned upon Titus' accession in 79. But Titus once again felt compelled to send Berenice away because of her unpopularity at Rome, and the perceived unsuitability of such a mistress – or, worse, wife – for a Roman emperor (for a fuller account of what is known of her life and the relationship, see CHAPTER 4, THE EMPEROR TITUS, section 3). According to Suetonius' famous lapidary formulation this pained them both: *Titus Berenicem dimisit invitum invitam* (Titus sent Berenice away, though neither wished it," *Tit.* 7.7). Beyond this, reports from antiquity offered nothing on her personal grief at being compelled to leave Rome.

It was seventeenth-century French literature that first elevated Berenice to the level of a tragic heroine. A first step in this direction was taken by Pierre Le Moyne, who treated the affair from Titus' point of view in Book 7 of *Les Peintures Morales*, published between 1640 and 1643. This work catalogs exemplary virtuous deeds selected from throughout human history; Titus' relationship with Berenice appears under the heading "La Modération victorieuse de l'Amour." Le Moyne has Berenice accompany Titus to Rome after the sack of Jerusalem and she is present as well for his (joint) Judean triumph in 71 CE. The author remarks suggestively on the remarkable spectacle witnessed by the Roman people that day, namely, "la triomphe de son Empereur, victorieux de la Judée, et la Triomphe d'une Juive, victorieuse de l'Empereur" (the triumph of their emperor, victorious over Judea, and the triumph of a Jewess, victorious over the emperor, *Peintures Morales*, bk. 7 pt. 2; in fact Berenice was not present and Titus was not yet emperor). After the death of Vespasian, Titus realizes that he must, for reasons of state, send Berenice away; Le Moyne characterized this decision in stirring terms:

L'Histoire qui ne fait valoir que le bruit et le tumulte, et qui ne s'arreste que sur le sang et parmy les ruines, passe trop légèrement sur une si généreuse action. Elle vaut pourtant la conquête de la Judée, et il n'y fallut pas moins de courage qu'à douze sièges et à dix batailles.

Le Moyne, *Peintures Morales*, bk. 7 pt. 2

History which emphasizes only noise and tumult, which pays heed only to bloodshed and likes to linger among ruins, passes too lightly over such a noble action. [Titus' dismissal of Berenice] is nevertheless equal to the conquest of Judea, and took as much courage as twelve sieges and ten battles.

Le Moyne's five-page account of Titus' love affair with Berenice proved seminal for subsequent writers, raising it to prominence and affording it a majesty and dignity that would capture the imagination of subsequent French writers.

Properly fictional treatments of Titus and Berenice's affair begin with *Les Femmes Illustres ou les Harangues Héroïques* (1642), probably written by Madelaine de Scudéry

(though initially published under the name of her brother Georges de Scudéry). It consists of a series of imaginary letters from illustrious women of antiquity. Berenice's letter to Titus, the *Eighth Harangue*, details their affair and her banishment from Rome (in the reign of Vespasian and at his command) in order to quell popular unease. Berenice asserts that she and Titus were married (cf. Cass. Dio 66.15, quoted earlier in this section), but does not ask to be allowed to return to Rome. To the contrary, she states that she left Rome of her own accord and for Titus' benefit, but against his wishes (contre sa volonté, 152). In return, Berenice asks merely to be Titus' only love:

Mais après avoir contenté tout le monde à mon préjudice, ayez l'équité de vous souvenir que Bérénice doit être votre seule passion. Si j'obtiens cette grâce de vous, je partirai avec quelque douceur malgré toutes mes amertumes, et bien loin de faire des imprécations contre mes ennemis, je ferai des vœux pour leur félicité, puisque j'en ferai pour votre conservation. Puissiez-vous donc, ô Titus, ... faire tant de belles choses, et par votre insigne valeur et par votre rare bonté, que du consentement de toutes les nations, vous puissiez un jour être appelé l'Amour et les délices du genre humain.

de Scudéry, *Harangues Héroïques* 154–5

But after having gratified everyone else at my own expense, have the fairness to remember that Berenice must be your only passion. If I obtain this from you, I will go with a measure of consolation despite my bitterness, and far from cursing my enemies, I will wish for their happiness, since I will be doing this for your preservation. May you, O Titus ... accomplish many splendid deeds, both through your singular valor and your uncommon kindness, so that by the consent of all peoples, you may one day be called the love and delight of the human race.

The concluding wish amounts to a kind of *vaticinium ex eventu* (prophecy from the event) by precisely rendering in French Suetonius' celebrated characterization of Titus as "the darling and delight of the human race" (*amor ac deliciae generis humani*, *Tit.* 1). And in the epilogue the author notes that Berenice got her wish, for she was indeed Titus' last love. What is novel in Scudéry's treatment vis-à-vis earlier literature is the focus upon Berenice. Whereas ancient sources treat Berenice as an inappropriate, even a scheming, foreign mistress, Scudéry presents us with a fleshed-out and appealing figure, completely without ambition to share the Roman throne, sincere and passionate in her love for Titus, and willing to sacrifice everything for him. As Bell (1936, 29) well observes, Scudéry's seminal contribution was to bring Berenice to the attention of contemporary French writers, and to endow her with many of the attractive qualities that are found in their later treatments.

In the years 1648–51, Jean Regnault de Segrais published the first four volumes of a novel entitled *Bérénice*, which, however, was never completed. In this novel, the story of Titus and Berenice is developed imaginatively – and with little regard for the known facts. Segrais has Titus *and* Domitian fall in love with Berenice; she, however, reciprocates towards neither, as she is devoted to another man, her lover Izatès. Whereas Domitian is lustful and wicked, Titus is virtuous and respectful, as evidenced by his declaration to her:

Peu de mortels ont reçu du ciel et de la fortune plus de caresses que moi. Mais si l'un et l'autre ont toujours secondé les desseins de ce Titus, qui a souhaité l'Empire, et qu'ils y ont fait parvenir, qu'ils ont suscité de traverses à ce Titus, qui avait mis toute sa gloire et tous ses

désirs à servir l'adorable Bérénice! Et comme sans doute cette partie a toujours été la meilleure de moi-même, certainement je puis dire, Madame, que toutes les grâces et les faveurs que j'ai reçues d'eux ont moins apporté de joie à mon âme que les rigueurs de Bérénice n'y laissent de troubles et de désordres.

(Segrais, *Bérénice* vol. 4, 36–7)

Few mortals have received from heaven and from fortune more favor than me. But if both have always supported the designs of that Titus who wished for empire, and they have enabled him to achieve this, they have failed that Titus who had put all his glory and all his desires in the service of the lovely Berenice! And as this has without doubt always been the best part of me, certainly I can say, Madam, that all the grace and favor that I received have brought less joy to my soul than the hardships of Berenice have brought troubles and distress.

After the death of Izatès, Berenice disappears and Titus is devastated. This radically ahistorical approach was largely rejected in later treatments, but Michaut (1907, 131–2) detects the influence of Segrais in Corneille's (ahistorical) role of Domitian as amorous rival to Titus, and in Racine's (ahistorical) role of Antiochus, even though these playwrights acknowledge only ancient sources in their prefaces.

In 1660, the dramatist Jean Magnon published a tragicomedy *Tite*, which appears never to have been staged. The play is set in the imperial palace at Rome shortly after Titus' accession. Magnon transforms the historical record into fantasy in a great many respects, but none more so than in actually having Berenice (who initially arrives in Rome incognito, disguised as a man named Cleobule) marry Titus at the end of the play to the acclamation of an adoring Roman public. Gros (1921) has argued that Magnon had a considerable influence on Corneille; this view is seconded by Bell (1936, 37), for whom Corneille's *Tite et Bérénice* follows "very much the same plan" as Magnon's *Tite*. An intriguing element of Magnon's play is the figure of Mucie, probably inspired by the historical Domitia (Bell 1936, 33), over whom Cassius Dio suggests the two brothers had some difficulties (66.26.4). Mucie is the daughter of Mucianus – an entirely ahistorical character, but one obviously suggested to the author by the historical importance of Mucianus (see CHAPTER 2, THE REMARKABLE RISE OF THE FLAVIAN DYNASTY, section 6).

By the second half of the seventeenth century, then, the story of Titus and Berenice had been raised to literary prominence. The ill-starred love affair then received what many regard as its supreme articulation in Jean Racine's tragedy *Bérénice* (1670), widely acknowledged as a masterpiece, and the culminating work of seventeenth-century French tragedy. *Bérénice* was not composed with exacting faithfulness or dependence on the ancient sources; it is shaped rather by Racine's transformative agenda, by his desire to fashion the story of Titus and Berenice into "an exemplary tale of duty overcoming individual inclination and of love overcoming sexual attraction" (Maskell 2004, 99). It is doubtless significant for Racine that the conqueror of the Jews takes a Jewish queen as mistress, for Racine's purpose is in part to achieve a "subversion of orientalist clichés" (Maskell 2004, 99). He makes of Berenice a noble figure whose conduct transcends the Roman prejudices that drive her from Rome. Racine was clearly working within a French tradition; but he makes a point of signaling the inspiration of Suetonius' brief report that Titus loved Berenice and was reported to have promised marriage, but unwillingly sent her from Rome in the early days of his principate. The playwright quotes and translates Suetonius' famous *invitus invitam* phrase (*Tit.* 7.7, quoted earlier in this section) in the

preface to the play. At the same time, Racine draws inspiration from the tragic account of the love affair between Aeneas and Dido in Book 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which the playwright also mentions in his preface. In many respects, Racine's historical figures are refracted through the prism of their mythic Virgilian counterparts. This cross-fertilization inevitably entails a partial displacement, moving the tragedy away from a precise "Flavian" context. Racine sets the dramatic time of the play very early in the reign of Titus, a mere eight days after the death of Vespasian. This is an important choice, and one that adds to the emotionally wrought quality of the play. As Bell (1936, 33) notes, "Racine presents Titus as meriting sympathy for the death of his father eight days before and faced with the necessity of sending away his loved one when he most needs her consolation." Racine's plot has a love triangle with Titus and Antiochus, king of Comagene, both passionately in love with Berenice, "Queen of Palestine," but she in love only with Titus. After the death of Vespasian, it is widely expected that Titus will marry his lover, despite strong popular sentiment against marriage to a foreign queen, but Titus chooses his duty to Rome over his passion for Berenice. Titus' decision, already taken when the action of the play starts, entails a moment of "conversion" along the lines of Suetonius' account – the new emperor embraces his public responsibilities at the expense of his private wishes. For Racine, the greatness of Titus and Berenice resides in their refusal to sacrifice political responsibility for love – a choice that ultimately "reaffirms and renders sublime the mutual love of Roman emperor and Jewish queen" (Auchincloss 1996, 66). This paradox is captured in Berenice's closing remark: "Je l'aime, je le fuis; Titus m'aime, il me quitte" ("I love him, but I flee from him; Titus loves me, but leaves me," Act 5 Scene 7).

Racine may have been in competition with compatriot Pierre Corneille, who composed his *Tite et Bérénice*, at much the same time. Racine's play was first performed November 21, 1670 at the Théâtre de Bourgogne; Corneille's was first performed by the theater troupe of the Palais Royal the following week. Of the two plays, Racine's has enjoyed greater success both with contemporary and later audiences.

In his *Tite et Bérénice*, styled a *comédie héroïque* in the subtitle, Corneille takes a different approach to the material, and achieves a different dramatic orchestration. His play is more complex and in certain respects more grounded in what we might call a "Flavian imaginary": he describes tensions and rivalries between Titus and Domitian and makes meaningful references to important contemporary events (for example, the eruption of Vesuvius in Act 4, Scene 1). The affair itself is also treated in a more precise, diachronic fashion by Corneille, with an initial separation during the principate of Vespasian, and then a definitive separation when Berenice returned to Rome after Vespasian's death (cf. Cass. Dio 66.15, 66.18). Corneille signals Suetonius' lapidary reference to the affair, having Titus paraphrase the famous *invitus invitam* phrase (*Tit.* 7.7, quoted earlier in this section): "La raison me la fait, malgré vous, malgré moi" ("Reason compels me, despite your wishes and mine", Act 5, Scene 5). Also noteworthy is Corneille's grasp of the vital role played by the Jewish rebellion and the financial backing of Berenice and her brother in the rise of the Flavians. Speaking of Titus to Domitie she says:

Il peut se souvenir, dans ce grade sublime / Qu'il soumit votre Rome en détruisant Solyme /
Qu'en ce siège pour lui je hasardai mon rang, / Prodiguai mes trésors, et mes peuples leur sang ...

Corneille, *Tite et Bérénice* Act 3, Scene 3

He might recall, in his lofty position, that he became master of Rome by destroying Jerusalem, that in the course of that siege I risked my rank, and freely gave of my treasures and my people's blood.

The character of Domitian, not present in Racine's play, is portrayed as cynical, scheming and pitiless. Jealousy of his brother, in love as well as politics, drives his actions throughout. Corneille ingeniously makes the audience, and Berenice, aware that her marriage to Titus would provide Domitian with a viable pretext for a plot to dethrone his brother (Act 4, Scene 1). In order to develop this sibling rivalry, Corneille adds a fourth major character, invented for the purposes of the play, Domitian's love object Domitie. This beautiful noblewoman of exalted birth reciprocates Domitian's feelings, but is driven by ambition to be empress. When the play opens, Berenice has already been sent away by Titus, who has engaged himself to Domitie. This was done on the advice of counselors, who feared that Domitie would otherwise marry Domitian and that formidable pair would then stage a coup to gain the throne. Upon learning of the engagement, Berenice returns to Rome and pleads with Titus to break it off: she is willing to endure his marriage to anyone save Domitie, of whose beauty and nobility she is jealous. Domitian likewise endeavors to terminate the engagement, ultimately threatening, with cold-blooded calculation, to marry Berenice himself, should Titus go through with the marriage to Domitie. This complex and distasteful situation is finally resolved by Titus, who resolves never to marry, declares Domitian his successor, and allows the marriage of Domitian and Domitie. That couple thus has the secure expectation that they will in due course inherit the throne. Corneille's erotic complications probably owe a debt of inspiration to Magnon (Gros 1921, 232–40), Auchincloss (1996, 63) complains that "this awkward plot makes four petty persons out of the four main characters"; in addition "there is no love in a play that was supposed to be all about it." In dramatic terms, then, the play is generally regarded as something of a failure: its mixed reception registering conspicuously by comparison with Racine's *Bérénice*. Be that as it may, Corneille has achieved a more complex and a more suggestive act of Flavian reception.

If the fascination with Berenice and her relationship with Titus is, in its earliest manifestations, a predominantly French literary phenomenon, it soon spreads to other parts of Europe. An Italian opera, *Il Tito*, composed by Antonio Cesti (music) and Carlo Sigismondo Capace (libretto) was produced in 1666. Shortly thereafter the English playwright Thomas Otway produced the drama *Titus and Berenice* (1676). Subsequent periods have seen a great many dramas, operas, ballets, and novels including, from Germany, the novel *Berenice* by Heinrich Vollrat Schumacher (1890) and the drama *Titus und die Jüdin* by Hans Kyser (1911); the Hebrew drama *Beriniḳah* by Eisig Silberschlag and Carl de Haas (1945); the English novels *Berenice, Princess of Judea* by Leon Kolb (1959) and *Agrippa's Daughter* by Howard Melvin Fast (1964). Berenice has also been the subject of works of visual art, such Giuseppe Bessuoli's painting *Tito che abbandona Berenice* (1828), and more recently, French film: Pierre-Alain Jolivet's *Bérénice* (1968) and Raoul Ruiz's *Bérénice* (1983).

Closely related to the literary fascination with the relationship between Titus and Berenice was a more specific interest in the former as a high-minded and benevolent ruler. This found a home in European drama, particularly in the period of absolute monarchs, for whom the second Flavian emperor could serve as either a protreptic model

or a gratifying allegory. The most successful such work is Pietro Metastasio's *La Clemenza di Tito* (1734), composed when the playwright served at the court of Charles VI, and offering, as the title suggests, a fictional illustration of Titus' mild and forgiving disposition. The action unfolds in the first year of Titus' reign (79 CE), around the time of Vesuvius' catastrophic eruption (mentioned at the end of the first act, with Titus declaring his intention to help the survivors). The dramatic action is driven by Vitellia, daughter of the deposed Emperor Vitellius, who resolves to assassinate Titus, whom she loves, because he has chosen Berenice as his consort. Vitellia convinces her would-be lover Sestus to commit the murder. After Titus sends Berenice away, and other obstacles to her imperial ambitions are removed, Vitellia tries to avert Sestus but is too late: he has already set fire to the Capitol, expecting Titus to perish in the flames. The emperor, however, survives, and the remorseful Sestus then confesses the plot, though without implicating Vitellia, and is sentenced to death by the senate. Titus insists on interviewing Sestus before approving the decree, but Sestus, still choosing not to implicate Vitellia, is unable to explain his actions, and Titus is left with little choice but to sign the death sentence. Alone, Titus agonizes over his decision, declaring to the gods that had they wanted a stern ruler, they should have taken away his human heart. The next day, in the amphitheater, as Sestus is about to be executed, Vitellia interrupts the proceedings, declaring her guilt. Titus struggles with conflicting impulses before deciding to pardon the conspirators, esteeming their repentance more than their treachery. Metastasio's text was first set to music by the composer Antonio Caldara, who was also serving at the court of Charles VI; in the following decades other composers followed suit, most famously Mozart, whose opera (1791) was composed for the coronation of the emperor Leopold II as king of Bohemia.

In more recent times the historical novel has proven to be the most accommodating literary genre for imaginative re-creations of the Flavian Age. Novelists have tended to psychological explorations of members of the dynasty and associated figures, set against the backdrop of the period's major events. An exhaustive survey of historical novels dealing with the Flavians is beyond the scope of this chapter; but a few of the more noteworthy entries in the field will be mentioned.

The destruction of Jerusalem provides the historical backdrop for Henry Rider Haggard's *The Pearl-Maiden: A Tale of the Fall of Jerusalem*, which in a number of respects aligns itself with the late-antique Christian view of that event. This novel, first published in 1901, tells the tale of Mariam, a young Christian woman, and her love for Marcus, a Roman soldier (and eventual convert to Christianity). The novel features all three Flavians, who figure prominently in the later chapters. Haggard does not distort the historical record by making Vespasian or Titus Christians or Christian sympathizers. The treatment of the dynasty is largely conventional: the generous and morally upright Titus contrasts with his loathsome younger brother. But a subtle indictment of both Vespasian and Titus is detectable in their unwillingness directly to confront Domitian and offer firm resistance to his sinister schemes.

Perhaps the most extraordinary historical novelist to treat the Flavian Age is the German-Jewish writer Lion Feuchtwanger. Active in the Weimar era and the Nazi period, Feuchtwanger was a prolific writer of historical novels, among which it is the so-called Josephus trilogy that commands our attention here. The three volumes are *Der jüdische Krieg* (The Jewish War, 1932, echoing the title of Josephus' own history, but published

in English as *Josephus*); *Die Söhne* (The Sons, 1935, published in English as *The Jew of Rome*); *Der Tag wird kommen* (The Day Will Come, 1942, published in English as *Josephus and the Emperor*). The Josephus series was written during the rise of the Third Reich, from which Feuchtwanger became a fugitive, imperiled both as a Jew and an outspoken critic of Nazism. He began the trilogy in his native Germany, but completed it living in the United States as an exile.

Throughout his career, Feuchtwanger was fascinated by the question of Jewish identity; he believed that the unique historical circumstances of the Jews put them in a position culturally to mediate between East and West (Dollinger 2006, 66). The Roman empire first provided the conditions to achieve this mediation, and the remarkable circumstances of the Jewish rebel leader Yosef ben Mattityahu, who eventually become the Roman citizen Titus Flavius Josephus, was a singular embodiment of that possibility. But in the Flavian period, as in later times, this tantalizing prospect would remain unrealized. In Josephus, as Starr (1997, 390) observes, Feuchtwanger “found his most compelling paradigm for the historical destiny of Jews in Western Europe”; Josephus was for him “the archetype of the Jew in the world, in it yet not completely of it, successful, yet kept from final assimilation by a certain destiny – the necessary outsider.”

For Feuchtwanger, whose fascination with ambivalent situations is constantly in evidence (Petuchowski 1978, 213), Josephus offered a particularly absorbing protagonist. Drawing heavily on Josephus’ own prodigious literary output, he probes the ambiguities of his protagonist’s biography, as a man caught between two cultures – regarded by his fellow Jews as a traitor, and, in the novelist’s treatment, never fully accepted by the Romans. In *Der jüdische Krieg* he strips his protagonist of heroic qualities in order to turn his reader’s attention to the novel’s ideas (Dollinger 2006, 78). Josephus is caught between two conflicting allegiances, unable to embrace either, as he explains to Berenice:

‘Ich begreife beide, die Juden und die Römer. Allein wie soll ich beide halten? Ich sehe den Fanatismus der einen, der Barbarische der andern, aber ich komme nicht los, ich kann mich nicht entscheiden.’

Feuchtwanger, *Der jüdische Krieg*, bk. 5, ch. 18

‘I understand both peoples, the Jews and the Romans. But how am I to keep faith with both? If I could only be like those people in Jerusalem, or like the Romans! I can see the fanaticism of the one and the barbarism of the other, but I can’t find any solution, I can’t come to any decision.’

tr. Muir and Muir

Feuchtwanger’s Josephus initially champions the cosmopolitan ideal of the world citizen (a notion that was, in fact, closely associated with Stoic thought in the early imperial period). His aspires to reconcile Jews and Romans through the authority of his writing, but irrational politics make that a futile endeavor (Dollinger 2006, 80). At the end of the trilogy, Josephus acknowledges his failure and Feuchtwanger, in a decidedly ahistorical flourish, has him die in 107 (he almost certainly died several years earlier), while attempting to join a (fictitious) Jewish uprising.

Feuchtwanger offers decidedly unflattering portraits of the three Flavian emperors. Vespasian is presented as a brutish and cynical figure who, though letting Josephus live, often treats him callously. Titus is somewhat more refined and generous, but hardly

Suetonius' "delight and darling of the human race" (*Tit.* 1). On the question of Titus' intentions regarding the Temple (a matter that remains hotly debated by modern scholars: see CHAPTER 13, FLAVIAN JUDEA, section 2), Feuchtwanger has him waiver, finally ordering it to be spared in language so qualified that it is taken as tacit consent for destruction by the shrewd and vindictive soldiery. In conformity with Jewish legend, Titus later suffers physical and psychological torment; he comes to recognize that it was wrong to destroy the Temple, and to believe himself punished by Jehovah as a consequence of that deed, as he confesses to Josephus just before his death (*Die Söhne*, bk. 5 ch. 5). After his death, Feuchtwanger supplies the second Flavian emperor with a devastating epitaph: "Der Herr der Welt, der Kaiser, der Römer, der missratene Weltbürger" (The master of the world, the emperor, the Roman, the world citizen gone wrong, *Die Söhne*, bk. 5, ch. 17).

The final volume, *Der Tag wird kommen*, unfolds in the oppressive context of Domitian's reign. Feuchtwanger portrays Domitian as both vicious and delusional, and makes much of the controversial claim that Domitian insisted on the appellative *dominus et deus* (Master and God; see CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, section 2); indeed it is so widely used that it acquires the status of an acronym: "DDD". As emperor, Domitian believes himself to be in an ongoing contest of wits with Jehovah, and he behaves with increasing hostility to Josephus (the altered title of the English edition, *Josephus and the Emperor*, is meant to bring to the fore the clash of wills between the two). Domitian makes numerous attempts to torment Josephus, such as compelling him to participate in a humiliating ceremony at the Arch of Titus (on which see section 2.2). Josephus' second son dies in an "accident" ordered by Domitian, who believed the boy, as a descendant of David, to be a potential messiah, and so a threat to the Roman state (cf. Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.19–20).

What makes Feuchtwanger's trilogy so haunting is its underlying vision of the Flavian Age as a missed opportunity. The Flavian dynasty had arisen in the East, had enjoyed the financial and political support of the East, had established close personal ties with its elites. It had the means and the opportunity to bring into a greater degree of unity the eastern and western parts of the empire, to create a society that unified to a greater degree the civilizations of Rome, Greece, and Judea – even after the destruction of Jerusalem (or perhaps because of it). That possibility was, for Feuchtwanger, embodied in the figure of the Roman citizen Flavian Josephus, a Hellenized Jew whose writings were published in Greek for a Roman audience. For all his flaws Feuchtwanger's Josephus is a visionary: the aspiring world citizen, the champion of an impossible, utopian cosmopolitanism; a man tragically ahead of his time.

A far more sympathetic treatment of Vespasian is found in Lindsay Davis' *Course of Honour* (1997; the author is better known for her Marcus Didius Falco detective series, also set in Flavian Rome). An intriguing aspect of *Course of Honour* is that it is centered on the figure of Antonia Caenis, the freedwoman and personal secretary of Antonia Minor (mother of the emperor Claudius). Vespasian had a romantic relationship with her prior to his marriage to Flavia Domitilla; after the latter's death, Vespasian and Caenis resumed their former relationship (they could not marry as Augustan moral legislation forbade marriages between senators and freedwomen). It persisted even when he became emperor, ending only with her death in 75 CE (her funerary inscription survives on a large marble altar, discovered just outside the walls of Rome, near Porta Pia: *CIL*

6.12037). According to Suetonius, Caenis became Vespasian's wife in all but name (*Vesp.* 3). She was highly intelligent, had a remarkable memory, and her proximity to Vespasian gave her powerful influence over administration and decision-making. Cassius Dio characterizes Caenis as exceedingly faithful, and expresses his admiration both for this quality "and the fact that Vespasian should have been so much pleased with her" (65.14). The same historian also reports that she made huge sums of money in return for recommending particular individuals to Vespasian for appointments to governorships, generalships, priesthoods, and the like. As Freisenbruch (2010, 142) observes "Caenis is a fascinating and rare surviving example of a woman from outside the imperial family circle who was able to acquire a certain amount of prestige, personal wealth, and access to the political process, even though such privileges allowed few advances for women in Roman political life." In *Course of Honour* Davis imaginatively fleshes out this woman's life and her relationship with Vespasian, while remaining reasonably faithful to the historical record. Her characterization of Vespasian dwells on his sense of humor, his decency, and his loyalty, all qualities he shares with Caenis: his reported avarice and her profiteering are expunged from Davis' idealizing portraits. The enduring bond between the two provides an abundance of narrative material; the more "epic" moments of Vespasian's life unfold "offstage" as it were, reported in novelistic equivalents of the messenger's speech. This processing of historical events through the experiences and perceptions of a woman at the heart of imperial power is an ingenious and refreshing organizational premise.

Davis is perhaps somewhat less successful in her more recent attempt to probe the psychology of Domitian in the novel *Master and God* (2012). The title signals the controversial claim that Domitian insisted on the appellative *dominus et deus* (Master and God), which Davis, like Feuchtwanger, takes as given. The novel features some inventive touches – as when Domitian's reported predilection for catching flies and skewering them with a sharpened stylus (Suet. *Dom.* 3) is focalized through one of the ill-fated insects – and vividly captures the paradoxical aspects of Domitian's conduct. But the attempt to explain his paranoia (in her view) as arising from the trauma of the perilous final days of the civil war (on which see CHAPTER 5, THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN, section 1) seems both implausible in itself and anachronistic in the terms in which it is presented.

2 Monumental impressions

In later ages imperial Rome has often been regarded as the greatest and most splendid city of the ancient world – or even of all human history. Flavian monuments have played a prominent role in conveying to subsequent eras the magnificence that was Rome. The importance of the Flavian building program for shaping the monumental landscape of Rome has long been recognized; Darwall-Smith (1996, 17) succinctly captures its lingering impact:

A visitor to Rome today cannot avoid the Flavians. The valley at the end of the Via dei Fori Imperiali is still dominated by the Colosseum, much of the Palatine preserves traces of Domitian's rebuilding, Bernini's Fountain of the Four Rivers in the Piazza Navona has as its centerpiece an obelisk praising Domitian, and the east end of the Forum culminates in the Arch of Titus. Compared to the great builder-emperors Augustus, Trajan and Hadrian, the Flavian emperors, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, will seem to the unprejudiced eye to have made just as important an architectural contribution to Rome.

This section will consider the two Flavian monuments that have survived in recognizable form to the present day: the Flavian Amphitheater and the Arch of Titus. It should not be forgotten, though, that even those structures that have not endured will have influenced intervening periods and have their own history of reception. We have already seen the Temple of the Flavian gens (*Templum gentis Flaviae*) playing a role in Claudius Gothicus' building program. The Baths of Titus were renowned in later antiquity; Domitian's palace on the Palatine (the *Domus Flavia*) was an architectural marvel. The Temple of Peace (*Templum Pacis*) was hailed by Pliny the Elder as "one of the most beautiful works the world has ever seen" (*NH* 36.102). Ammianus Marcellinus, writing at the end of the fourth century, concurred, ranking it among Rome's most magnificent sights (16.10.14, calling it the *Forum Pacis*). Though largely destroyed by fire in 192, the complex has continued to stir the imagination in subsequent periods, as can be seen in British Romantic poet John Dyer's *The Ruins of Rome* (1740):

... Lo, the fane of Peace,
Built by that prince, who to the trust of power
Was honest, the delight of human-kind.
Three nodding aisles remain; the rest a heap
Of sand and weeds; her shrines, her radiant roofs,
And columns proud, that from her spacious floor,
As from a shining sea, majestic ruse
A hundred foot aloft, like stately beech
Around the brim of Dion's glassy lake,
Charming the mimic painter: on the walls
Hung Salem's sacred spoils; the golden board,
And golden trumpets, now conceal'd, entomb'd
By the sunk roof ...

Dyer was in fact laboring under the widespread misconception of his day that the ruined vaults on the north end of the Forum were the remains of the Temple of Peace. His act of the imagination is thus all the more telling, as a "disembodied" attestation of the lingering renown of this comparatively short-lived architectural complex.

One striking aspect of the Flavian building program by which Rome was "remade" is that virtually all of its monuments resulted from and commemorated the victory over Judea (Millar 2005; see also CHAPTER 8, REMAKING ROME, section 2). It is now virtually certain, thanks to a dedicatory inscription convincingly reconstructed by Alföldy (1995), that the Flavian Amphitheater was a monument built from the spoils of the conquest of Judea. As Noreña (2003, 37) observes it "stood in a long line of "manubial" monuments at Rome, but its grandeur and topographical centrality assured that it would never be eclipsed as the most conspicuous architectural expression of Roman military victory." In addition to affirming its dedicatee's postmortem deification, the Arch of Titus commemorated his conquest of Jerusalem. This "obscure monument to Hebrew desolation," as the poet Shelley characterized it, depicts objects plundered from the Temple; a bas-relief (see Fig. 6.2) proved influential in establishing the Menorah as the most dramatic symbol of the looting (as seen in Nicolas Poussin's seventeenth-century painting *The Destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem*, discussed earlier in this chapter, and Francesco Hayez's like-named nineteenth-century masterpiece). The object itself and like

items (“Salem’s sacred spoils”, in John Dyer’s just-quoted poem) were on display in the Temple of Peace. Jews and Judaism, and the defeat and subjugation of both, had suddenly become ubiquitous themes of Rome’s monumental landscape (Millar 2005).

2.1 *Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum)*

For subsequent ages, the Flavian Amphitheater has been the most conspicuous and imposing structure to survive from ancient Rome, and arguably the most evocative as well. Hopkins and Beard (2005) open their monograph on this magnificent arena with the simple declaration that it is “the most famous, and instantly recognizable, monument to have survived from the classical world.” This elliptical amphitheater is the largest such structure ever built by the Romans, and is rightly considered a crowning achievement in Roman architecture and engineering. If it was originally intended to be the showpiece of the Flavian dynasty, it has subsequently become emblematic of Roman greatness in an almost trans-historical sense.

It should be kept in mind that the Flavian Amphitheater was not an isolated monument, but the centerpiece of the dynasty’s monumental program. Its physical centrality is in itself a noteworthy feature, for in most Roman cities the amphitheater was a more peripheral structure (in Pompeii, for example, it was located outside the city walls). Part of the unique impact of the Flavian Amphitheater derives from its central position, a benefit accruing from the dismantling of the Golden House and other Neronian structures, which allowed the Flavians to remake the heart of Rome itself.

From late antiquity onwards the Flavian Amphitheater has been better known as the Colosseum. The name derives from the “Colossus,” an immense statue, originally of the emperor Nero, but rededicated to the Sun god by Vespasian in 75 CE, that stood next to it. The base of the statue survived until 1933, when it was destroyed by Mussolini during construction of the Via dei Fori Imperiali. There is something of an historical irony in this familiar medieval and modern name for the Flavian Amphitheater, as its Neronian evocations seem to blur the Flavian origins of the structure. But as just noted, the Colosseum has to some degree “transcended” the Flavian era in which it was produced: it is not merely one of the supreme triumphs of Roman engineering, but perhaps the most iconic symbol of the Roman empire and its power. The popular imagination, as Hopkins and Beard (2005, 35) point out, “often sees [the Flavian Amphitheater] as a Neronian monument, and films (from Cecil B. DeMille’s *Sign of the Cross* to Mervyn Le Roy’s *Quo Vadis*) have blithely envisaged Nero presiding over the massacre of Christians there – almost two decades before it would in fact have been built.”

The surpassing scale and magnificence of the Flavian Amphitheater was recognized even before it reached its final form. The epigrammist Martial, composer of the *Liber de Spectaculis*, a collection of poems celebrating, at least in part, the lavish inaugural games held by Titus, declared in the opening poem that the new structure outshone the pyramids of Egypt, the walls of Babylon, and all the architectural achievement of the Greeks (*Spect.* 1.1–6). It was, he concluded, simply the greatest of all structures:

Omnis Caesareo cedit labor Amphitheatro,
unum pro cunctis fama loquetur opus.

Mart. *Spect.* 1.7–8

Every building yields to Caesar's Amphitheater;
This one structure shall usurp the fame once shared by all.

In later periods, even as it crumbled, the Colosseum has stood as an imposing reminder of the greatness that was Rome. Situated on the route leading from St Peter's to the Lateran, it was an endless source of wonder to medieval pilgrims to Rome, a supreme marvel of paganism. In the present day it remains one of the few ancient monuments that has not been dwarfed or outshone by modern structures.

In terms of form, the Flavian Amphitheater has exerted a powerful and enduring influence. As Hopkins and Beard (2005, 24) observe, "the clearest indication of the monument's importance is the rash of imitations it spawned. Although there were several earlier stone amphitheaters, once the Colosseum had been built it seems to have become the model for many if not most of those built in Italy and the provinces – well over 200 by the end of the Roman Empire." So, for example, the two major amphitheaters in Narbonese Gaul, those at Arles and Nîmes, both employ a series of radial and concentric ramps that is clearly modeled on the Colosseum (Anderson 2012, 163). But the influence of the Colosseum extends well beyond the Roman Empire itself. In terms of providing inspiration for later structures, Aldrete and Aldrete (2012, 167) suggest that the Flavian Amphitheater is one of the two most influential buildings in all of history (the other being the Pantheon), as it is "the original model for most large sports arenas found all over the world today."

Roughly one-third of the Colosseum has survived the damage incurred over the centuries, which took various forms. A series of coins dating to 223 commemorate its restoration and reopening by Alexander Severus after a fire in 217 that destroyed upper level seating and the arena floor (Wiedemann 2002, 18). Further repairs were needed in 250 or 252 and 320 (Claridge 1998, 276). A surviving inscription attests to restorative work carried out in the fifth century, probably to repair damage resulting from an earthquake in 443. As late as 519 it was used by Theodoric the Goth to stage *venationes* (wild beast hunts; gladiatorial events had been banned by the emperor Honorius more than a century earlier) in an attempt to match the lavish public entertainments of Roman emperors. But the following decade saw the Ostrogoth king Totila dismantle part of the amphitheater for the sake of the metal clamps that held the stones together. Though doing comparatively little damage, this inaugurated the practice of deconstruction that would, over the course of more than a millennium, gradually reduce the Colosseum to its present form (see Fig. 27.3). Whereas Totila had sought only the valuable bronze clamps, later plunderers removed the stones themselves, which served as convenient 'building blocks' for new structures.

It was an ecclesiastical misconception that prevented the Colosseum's total dismembering. Medieval authorities believed it to have been a habitual site of the execution of Christian martyrs. This is almost certainly wrong for, as scholars have pointed out, there are no genuine records of Christians being put to death in the Colosseum (Hopkins and Beard 2005, 103). Be that as it may, a long line of popes regarded the Colosseum as a hallowed site, and this motivated preservation and even repair of the crumbling structure. There were exceptions: in the seventeenth century Pope Urban VIII allowed the Barberini family to remove travertine from the Colosseum to build the Palazzo Barberini (Hopkins and Beard 2005, 161); but on the whole looting diminished. It finally ceased altogether in the mid-eighteenth century, when Pope Benedict XIV declared the



Fig. 27.3 Flavian Amphitheater or Colosseum, Rome 80 CE. Photograph by Steven L. Tuck

Colosseum sanctified by the blood of early Christian martyrs, added Stations of the Cross, and dedicated it to the Passion of Jesus (Levick 1999, 205).

The Colosseum was an essential component and inevitable highlight of the “Grand Tour,” the conventional trip taken in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by upper class European young men (and later young women, as we see in E. M. Forster’s *A Room with a View*) seeking to “round off” their education by visiting the most important and representative sites of Classical and Renaissance culture. Such tourism brought the Colosseum to the attention of foreign writers, who have frequently been captivated by the magnificent ruin. In *Pictures from Italy* (1846), Charles Dickens wrote:

It is the most impressive, the most stately, the most solemn, grand, majestic, mournful sight, conceivable. Never in its bloodiest prime can the sight of the gigantic Colosseum, full and running over with the lustiest life, have moved one heart, as it must move all who look upon it now, a ruin. God be thanked: a ruin!

Many Romantics, including Byron and Shelley, shared Dickens’ view that the Flavian Amphitheater was more evocative as a ruin – a perfect blend of magnificence, decay and fatality. The Colosseum scene in Germaine de Staël’s *Corinne, ou l’Italie* (1807), made this ruin by moonlight an irresistible setting for poets like Byron, who used it in *Childe Harold* and *Manfred*, as well as for Shelley, who began an intriguing short story, *The Coliseum*, which he unfortunately never completed.

In the twentieth century, the Flavian Amphitheater was arguably the most important structure of the symbolic landscape of Fascist Rome. Mussolini presented his rule as marking the re-emergence of the Roman Empire. Hence he strove to rekindle a sense not just of Roman greatness, but also a sense of its eternity, of the ancient notion of *Roma aeterna*; no monument could better embody and articulate this double idea than *il Colosseo*. Mussolini made the Colosseum an important ceremonial locus, as well as a focal point of his monumental reconception of Rome. In 1932 he completed the *Via dell' Impero*, a grand avenue with broad sidewalks that connected the Piazza Venezia (it was from his balcony overlooking this capacious public square that Mussolini delivered his most important speeches) to the Colosseum. This entailed demolishing a number of medieval and Renaissance buildings that had accrued over the centuries. It also entailed the partial leveling of the Velia, one of Rome's celebrated hills, in order to make the Colosseum visible from Piazza Venezia. All this amounted to Mussolini's most radical act of reconfiguring the landscape of Rome (Baxa 2010, 84–5).

Somewhat more abstractly, the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, a large building complex commissioned in 1935 by Mussolini for the planned 1942 World Exhibition, designed by the neoclassical architect Michello Piacentini, and constructed between 1938 and 1943, owes a marked debt of inspiration to the Flavian Amphitheater. Indeed it is better known to Italians as the “Colosseo Quadrato” (Square Colosseum). Regarded as one of the most emblematic works of Fascist architecture, the Colosseo Quadrato was intended by Mussolini as an homage to the Flavian Amphitheater, with which it shares in particular a series of superimposed loggias, shown on the facade as six rows of nine arches each.

2.2 *Arch of Titus*

Completed sometime after the death of Titus in 81, the arch that bears his name is the oldest surviving example of a triumphal arch, a peculiarly Roman architectural form with a long history that reaches back to the second century BCE. In consisting of a single passageway, the Arch of Titus is typical of the earlier form of the Roman triumphal arch. Located in the Forum Romanum at the highest point of the *Via Sacra*, the arch “formed the mid-point of a series of monuments that transformed the historical identity of the triumphal way” (Dyson 2010, 176). Initially planned as a traditional triumphal arch, it became after Titus' premature death a monument that also celebrated his apotheosis (see CHAPTER 6, IMPERIAL IMAGE-MAKING, section 1.2).

As a monument, the Arch of Titus has provoked a great many responses and imitations. From later antiquity, as already observed, Constantine's triumphal arch, erected beside the Flavian Amphitheater, is in many respects in dialogue with the Arch of Titus. In the Renaissance, its influence is evident in a number of more complex structures. So, for example, the portico of the Basilica of Sant' Andrea in Mantua (1462) designed by Leon Battista Alberti, is based on the scheme of the Arch of Titus. A more pervasive influence is evident from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, when the triumphal arch was revived as an architectural form in Europe, and the Flavian arch provided the general model for most such monuments. The form enjoyed a particular vogue in the nineteenth-century, with the peak of European imperialism. Napoleon was deeply impressed,

both in the abstract and the concrete by the Roman triumphal arch, which he regarded as the quintessential monument of imperial Rome. After becoming emperor, he launched his own monumental building program in Paris, which was to be the “new Rome.” This program famously included the Arc de Triomphe, commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 to commemorate his victories (though it was not completed until 1836, during the reign of Louis-Philippe). Designed by Jean-François Thérèse Chalgrin, the Arc de Triomphe was closely patterned on the Arch of Titus: though significantly larger than its Flavian model (50 versus 15 m high), it maintains precisely the same proportions. The influence of the Flavian arch is also evident in the Porte d’Aix (also known as the Porte Royale), a triumphal arch in Marseille, initially conceived in 1784, but not completed until 1839. The architect, Michel-Robert Penchaud, took the Arch of Titus as his principal model, but also borrowed elements from the Arch of Trajan at Benevento and, to a lesser degree, the Arch of Constantine. The so-called Wellington Arch in London, designed by Edward Burton, is likewise an adaptation of the Arch of Titus. Completed in 1830, this arch was originally intended as an entrance to Buckingham Palace. The Flavian arch was also the direct inspiration for the India Gate in Delhi (1931) designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. A debt of inspiration to the Arch of Titus is evident in the Siegestor in Munich (1852), designed by Friedrich von Gärtner and Eduard Mezger, dedicated to the Bavarian Army by Ludvig I. In the United States, the Flavian arch has inspired a number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century monuments, including the Washington Arch in Washington Park Square, New York (1889) and the National Memorial Arch at Valley Forge National Historical Park in Pennsylvania (1910).

The Arch of Titus as it appears today (see Fig. 27.4) is the result of its Napoleonic restoration. In the Middle Ages the monument had been incorporated into the city walls as an entrance gate, as part of the Palatine defenses erected by the Frangipane family. This process added a top story of brick, destroying the cornice, and removed the side pylons. The attic and its inscription on the west side were lost, along with the top half of the columns flanking the arch and their capitals. Upon occupying the Papal State (1809), Napoleon ordered the restoration of the Arch of Titus as part of his sweeping “resurrection” of Rome. The project, begun in 1819 by Raffaele Stern, presented particular difficulties, since removal of the Frangipane accretions was likely to trigger the collapse of the central archway. Stern thus resolved first to dismantle and then reassemble the monument. After his death in 1820 the project was brought to fruition by Giuseppe Valadier, with a great deal of supplementation, including the side pylons, most of the attic, its cornice, and the panel with its inscription on its east front recording the completion of its rebuilding by Pius VII in 1823. Thus, aside from the figured sculptural panels, “the Arch of Titus today is largely a nineteenth-century monument” (Watkin 2009, 188–90). Valadier sought to recreate the aesthetic unity of the original monument in its entirety through his exacting restoration, while retaining a sense of historicity by a differentiation of material (the modern supplements to the structure are of travertine, whereas the original construction was in marble). This “aggressive” restoration was not without contemporary critics. Stendahl, for one, lamented in his *Promenades dans Rome* (1828), that Valadier had fashioned “une copie de l’Arc de Titus” rather than the monument itself.

The Arch of Titus, it should be recalled, is the most direct monumental celebration of Titus’ conquest of Jerusalem and the defeat of the Jews. It is the only extant Roman



Fig. 27.4 Arch of Titus, Rome, after 81 CE (with nineteenth-century restoration of Giuseppe Valadier). Photograph by Steven L. Tuck

triumphal arch to include the representation of a triumphal procession, that of the joint Judean triumph of Vespasian and Titus. Hence, its friezes feature, as part of that procession, various objects plundered from the Temple, including the Menorah (the seven branched golden candelabrum), the Table of Shewbread, and the ritual trumpets; there is also a recumbent figure on a bier, a personification of the River Jordan. For Jews, the Arch of Titus constituted from the outset a painful and even humiliating reminder of a great national catastrophe. It is said that no Jew of Rome has ever willingly passed through it; this folklore was known to Germaine de Staël, who in *Corinne, ou l'Italie*, mentioned it in her travelog description of the landmark:

On prétend que les Juifs qui sont à Rome ne passent jamais sous cet arc; et l'on montre un petit chemin qu'ils prennent, dit-on, pour l'éviter. Il est à souhaiter, pour l'honneur des Juifs, que cette anecdote soit vraie: les longs ressouvenirs conviennent aux longs malheurs.

de Staël, *Corinne, ou l'Italie*, bk. 4, ch. 4

They say that Roman Jews never pass under this arch, and indicate a small road that is taken to avoid it. Let us hope, for the honor of the Jews, that this story is true, for enduring recollection befits great misfortune.

In truth, it has not always proven possible for Jews to avoid the Arch of Titus. For this monument has at times served as a humiliating staging point for ceremonial relations between the Vatican and the Jewish community in Rome, particularly when the Pope was a temporal ruler as well as a religious authority. It was customary for the Jewish community at Rome to participate in welcoming each new Pope, and on such occasions the Jews were required to assemble on Monte Giardano or, more frequently, at the Arch of Titus, which lay on the processional route of the Pope to the Vatican. When the new pontiff halted at the arch, rabbis and other representatives of the Jewish community were required to greet and honor the incoming pontiff in a ritual that included kissing his feet. Thereupon a Jew presented him with a copy of the Pentateuch and uttered a humble oath of loyalty. The earliest mention of this humiliating ceremony is for the accession of Pope Calixtus II in 1120; it continued until the sixteenth century. Some have claimed that it had ancient Roman origins (Watkin 2009, 188). The novelist Lion Feuchtwanger (discussed earlier in this chapter) appears to have drawn inspiration from this tradition, for he concludes *Die Söhne*, the second novel of his Josephus trilogy, with what would amount to the first such ceremonial humiliation at the Arch of Titus, forced upon Flavius Josephus by a vindictive Domitian.

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FURTHER READING

Van Dam (2011, 188-90) offers a brief but helpful discussion of Constantine's "Second Flavian dynasty"; Bardill (2011) offers scattered remarks. The introduction of Herbert (1905) includes an extensive survey of the Christian legends involving Vespasian and Titus as Christian avengers against the Jews. Levick (1999, 205-7) offers a brief overview of the *fortuna* of Vespasian. There is as yet comparatively little Anglophone scholarship on Feuchtwanger's Josephus trilogy; Dollinger (2006, 77-83) provides an overview and analysis. For the Flavians' monumental impact on the

urban landscape, see Millar (2005). See, too, various articles in Boyle and Dominik (2003): J. E. Packer, "Plurima et Amplissima Opera: Parsing Flavian Rome"; D. Frederick, "Architecture and Surveillance in Flavian Rome"; J. Henderson, "Par Operi Sedes: Mrs. Arthur Strong and Flavian Style, the Arch of Titus and the Cancellaria Reliefs." Specific studies include Hopkins and Beard (2005) on the Flavian Amphitheater, and Watkin (2009) on the Arch of Titus.

CHAPTER 28

Vesuvius and Pompeii

Andrew Zissos

1 Vesuvius and the Plinii

Pliny the Elder was born in Comum (modern Como) in Gallia Transpadana in 23 CE, the son of the equestrian Gaius Plinius Celer and his wife Marcella. He had an extensive military career (as was conventional for a member of the equestrian order) starting in 46 CE. He did not marry and had no children, whence his adoption of his nephew Pliny the Younger, who thereby became his heir. The elder Pliny was a passionate naturalist and scholar, as well as a prolific author; of his considerable output (see CHAPTER 26, LOST LITERATURE, section 1) we have only the *Natural History*. This is one of the largest literary works to survive intact from antiquity, and among the most influential (see CHAPTER 29, RECEPTION OF FLAVIAN LITERATURE, section 2.1). But here we are concerned less with his writings than with Pliny the man – or, perhaps better, Pliny the legend. Pliny has been seen by many critics as an emblematic figure of the Flavian Age. He was an intimate of both Vespasian and Titus, dedicating his magnum opus, the *Natural History* to the latter (see CHAPTER 24, LATIN PROSE LITERATURE, section 1). As a trusted member of Vespasian's circle, Pliny held a number of procuratorships and other offices; his last appointment was as commander of the Roman fleet at Misenum. His nephew tells us that, when he resided in Rome, “before daybreak he used to wait upon Vespasian (who also used his nights for transacting business), and then proceed to execute the orders he had received” (Plin. *Epist.* 3.5.9). In the dedication of the *Natural History*, a work largely composed in the nighttime hours, Pliny famously declared *vita vigilia est* (life is wakefulness,” *NH* pr. 18), an apt dictum for this sleep-deprived servant of the Flavian House and the Roman empire.

As commander of the Roman fleet at Misenum, the elder Pliny was residing on the Bay of Naples, along with his nephew and the latter's mother, when Vesuvius erupted on August 24, 79 CE. He died while undertaking a maritime rescue of residents imperiled by the eruption. The natural disaster and Pliny's heroic response to it are preserved in

the form of two letters penned by his nephew (Plin. *Epist.* 6.16, 20). These were written to the historian Tacitus at his request, by way of preliminary research for his own account (which, unfortunately, has not survived). In the first letter, the younger Pliny describes the intrepid conduct of his uncle; in the second, he describes his own experience as a witness to and, briefly, a refugee from the volcanic eruption.

The account begins early in the afternoon of August 24 (*Nonum Kal. Septembres hora fere septima*, *Epist.* 6.16.4) with the elder Pliny's attention being drawn to a strange cloud arising in the vicinity of Vesuvius "whose likeness and form resembled no tree more than a pine" (*nubes oriebatur, cuius similitudinem et formam non alia magis arbor quam pinus expresserit*, *Epist.* 6.16.5). This speaks to the distinctive "umbrella pine" shape of the cloud – which has, indeed, bequeathed to modern volcanology the term "Plinian" for this characteristic early manifestation of an eruption. His immediate impulse was to examine the curious phenomenon at close quarters: *magnum propiusque noscendum ut eruditissimo viro visum* (he, being a most learned man, realized that this was something significant that ought to be investigated from close at hand, *Epist.* 6.16.7). As a naturalist, Pliny's work was mostly at second hand – he was fond of saying that no treatise was so meager that one could not learn something from it – but he clearly grasped the importance of firsthand observation, and eagerly resorted to such when the opportunity presented itself. So he ordered a light vessel to be prepared, along with writing tablets to record his observations (*Epist.* 6.16.7).

The fact that this venture proved fatal to Pliny has made him a "martyr to science" in subsequent Western thought (Zirkle 1967, 553). Francis Bacon for one admired Pliny's fearless dedication to empirical inquiry. Bacon himself died in poignantly "scientific," if less heroic, circumstances, and remarked, in the last letter he ever wrote, that "I was likely to have had the fortune of Caius Plinius the Elder, who lost his life by trying an experiment about the burning of mountain Vesuvius" (To the Earl of Arundel, April 5, 1626; cited by Doody 2010, 33). But the popular view of Pliny as a martyr to science occludes a reconception of purpose. As he was about to set off Pliny was apprised of the mortal peril threatening residents beneath Vesuvius, whose only possible salvation was by sea, and so converted his scientific expedition into a rescue mission (*Epist.* 6.16.8–9). Nonetheless, his nephew reports that, within the constraints of this revised undertaking, he did not forsake the opportunity for scientific advancement that presented itself:

He headed swiftly into the area from which others were fleeing, and maintained a straight course, steering straight towards the danger. He was so fearless that he dictated and had notes taken of all the movements and shapes of that evil phenomenon as he observed them.

Plin. *Epist.* 6.16.9–10, tr. Walsh

After reaching the villa of his friend Pomponianus at Stabiae, Pliny and his attendants were obliged to spend the night there, since the agitated condition of the sea made immediate departure impossible; the following morning they were compelled to abandon the now tottering residence and try their luck on the shore. The scene was infernal:

By now it was daylight everywhere, but there it was night, blacker and denser than any night, though many torches and lights of various kinds relieved it. They decided to go out onto the shore and to investigate from close at hand whether the sea now allowed any departure, but it remained mountainous and hostile.

Plin. *Epist.* 6.16.17–8, tr. Walsh

It was under these conditions that Pliny expired:

My uncle lay down there on a discarded sail, and repeatedly drank cold water, which he had requested. Then flames and the smell of sulfur heralding the flames impelled the rest to flight and roused him. Leaning on two of his confidential slaves, he stood up and at once collapsed.

Plin. *Epist.* 6.16.18–9; tr. Walsh

His nephew attributes the death to asphyxiation (*Epist.* 6.16.19). Pliny appears to have been the only member of his company to perish in this manner, but we learn from his nephew's account that he was neither physically fit nor healthy, and had in the past suffered from respiratory problems.

What of Pliny the Younger? When invited by his uncle to join him on his scientific mission, as originally conceived, he had opted instead to stay at home in Misenum and study:

He [Pliny the Elder] ordered a swift ship to be made ready, and offered me the opportunity of accompanying him if I should wish to. But I replied that I preferred to keep at my studies – as it happened, he had given me a composition to write.

Plin. *Epist.* 6.16.7, tr. Walsh

Pliny and his mother passed their time oblivious to the danger that the eruption posed even at so great a distance, until a family friend burst in and urged them to evacuate, as others were doing:

We retired to the courtyard of the house, which extended a short distance between the sea and the buildings ... I asked for a book of Titus Livy and read it, and I also copied out passages (as I had begun earlier), as though in relaxation. Suddenly a friend of my uncle appeared ... When he saw my mother and myself sitting there, and me even reading a book, he rebuked her for her forbearance, and me for my untroubled attitude. But I concentrated on the book just as eagerly.

Plin. *Epist.* 6.20.4–5, tr. Walsh

Later, when the effects of the volcano became more obviously threatening, the younger Pliny and his mother joined the exodus of residents seeking refuge in areas more distant from Vesuvius. At one point the despairing mother urged her son to abandon her and save himself, a suggestion that he naturally rejected:

My mother then begged and encouraged and bade me to flee in any way I could. She said that this was possible for a young person, but that she herself, being weighed down by years and a frail physique, would be happy to die if she were not responsible for my death. My riposte was that I would not seek safety without her. I then grasped her hand and forced her to move faster.

Plin. *Epist.* 6.20.17, tr. Walsh

In these difficult circumstances the nephew reports his own apocalyptic impressions: “I believed I was perishing together with the whole world, and the whole world was

perishing with me – a wretched consolation for my mortal lot, yet a powerful one (*Epist.* 6.20.17).¹ Finally, when the eruption had calmed and conditions stabilized, he reports his first glimpse of the aftermath:

At last the darkness thinned out and vanished into smoke or cloud. True daylight came, and the sun also shone, but pallidly, as occurs at an eclipse. Our eyes, still trembling, were confronted with a scene of universal change, for everything was buried by deep ash, as though by snow.

Plin. *Epist.* 6.20.18, tr. Walsh

The two “Vesuvius letters” are among the most widely read ancient texts: they have immortalized the uncle’s heroics, while putting on record the nephew’s impressions of and response to the natural disaster. The younger Pliny’s presence on the Bay of Naples when Vesuvius erupted, and his full and immediate access to those who had been present at his uncle’s death have afforded the letters a singular authority.² His vivid account, as Gardner Coates (2011, 48) observes, has served in the modern era “as a sort of window through which to witness the eruption.” It has also inspired countless artists and writers; indeed it almost impossible to imagine a modern work of art or literature touching on Vesuvius or Pompeii that is not indebted to the younger Pliny’s epistolary account in some way. In what follows we will consider a few acts of reception that draw with particularly directness on the Vesuvius letters.

An always intriguing, if rather straightforward, mode of reception is the fictional reworking of scenes reported by Pliny. Here the tendency of modern writers has been to strip away the attempts of the nephew to lionize his own conduct in the Vesuvius letters (and not only them). In considering the nephew’s disinclination to accompany his uncle (*Epist.* 6.16.7, quoted above) Zirkle (1967, 557) drolly noted that “for a seventeen-year-old to prefer an exercise in Latin composition to viewing a volcanic eruption in the company of the commander of the fleet really strains our disbelief.” This point was not lost on Robert Harris, author of the recent blockbuster *Pompeii*, who recreates the exchange as follows:

He [sc. Pliny the Elder] pushed himself to his feet. ‘I must get down to my ship. Alexion!’ He shouted for his slave. ‘Gaius, why don’t you come with me?’ Forget your translation.’ He held out his hand and smiled. ‘I release you from your lesson.’ ‘Do you really uncle?’ Gaius [sc. Pliny the Younger] stared across the bay and chewed his lip. Clearly he, too, had realized the potential consequences of a second Etna on the bay. ‘That’s kind of you, but to be honest I’ve actually reached rather a tricky passage. Of course if you insist ...’ Pliny could see the boy was afraid, and who could blame him? [...] ‘No, no,’ he said with forced cheerfulness. ‘I won’t insist. The sea looks rough. It will make you sick. You stay here and look after your mother.’

Harris, *Pompeii*, ch. 17

Painters have also manifested an abiding enthusiasm for recreating scenes from Pliny’s letters, particularly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Artists naturally distinguished themselves as much by the selection of the scene as by the manner of depiction. An intriguing composition in this respect is Angelica Kauffman’s *Pliny the Younger and his Mother at Misenum*, 79 A.D. (1785), which elaborates on both of Pliny’s



Fig. 28.1 Angelika Kauffmann, *Pliny the Younger and his Mother at Misenum, 79 A.D.* 1785. Oil on canvas. 103.0 × 127.5 cm. (40 9/16 × 50 3/16 in.) frame: 140.5 × 116.0 cm. (55 5/16 × 45 11/16 in.). Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ. Photograph courtesy of Art Resource, New York, ART446938

letters in depicting the scene of warning at Misenum (see Fig. 28.1). The painting shows Pliny and his mother in the courtyard of their villa at Misenum. The son, a scroll open on his lap, holds suspended a stylus and writing tablet while a histrionic family friend urges them to bestir themselves (cf. *Epist.* 6.20.4–5, quoted earlier in this chapter); far in the background, framed within an archway, Vesuvius can be seen spewing forth lava, pumice and ash against a darkened sky. The painting, as Sigurdsson (1999, 1326) observes, “has the cool, detached crispness and clarity typical of Neoclassicism; the artist has recreated a historical moment in which the human figures dominate, rather than the volcano.” Gardner Coates (2011, 58) remarks on the intriguing choice of theme: Kauffman has “eschewed the sensational, and selected a scene in which the disaster proper becomes a visual footnote to the human drama in the foreground. She instead focuses the viewer on the historically inclined young man who would write the account of this event that would survive into the modern era, and so provide Kauffman with subject for a history painting.”

Kauffman’s “containment” of the dramatic eruption is a noteworthy feature: in most contemporary and subsequent paintings it is the volcano that dominates the human figures

rather than the other way around. This speaks to a fascination with the sublime characteristic of Romanticism, which took hold towards the end of the eighteenth century, for whose adherents the natural spectacle of Vesuvius in eruption, along with the intense fear and other sublime emotions it generated, was a cherished theme. Unsurprisingly, a number of artists were drawn to the dramatic scene of the elder Pliny's death. The Scottish landscape painter Jacob More produced an early rendering with *Mount Vesuvius in Eruption: The Last Days of Pompeii* (1780). In this composition, as Gardner Coates *et al.* (2012, 126) observe, "the sweeping bird's-eye view of the disaster dwarfs the pitiful human figures, even the great scholar Pliny and his companions. Their efforts to shield themselves from nature's wrath are fruitless, as the great umbrella cloud of ash gathers over the scene." A few decades later the French artist Pierre Henri de Valenciennes achieved a particularly powerful treatment of Pliny's death in his spectacular painting *The Eruption of Vesuvius, 24 August A.D. 79* (1813). Using the Vesuvius letters as his primary source, he depicts the scene in which the elder Pliny collapses into the arms of his two slaves as he succumbs to the choking clouds of fumes – a very precise rendering of Plin. *Epist.* 6.16.18–9, quoted earlier in this chapter. Valenciennes uses powerful chromatic effects and imagery along with small-scale figures to emphasize the sublime horror of the moment (Sigurdsson 1999, 1326). Buildings collapsing behind the three figures (perhaps suggested by Pliny's description of the tottering villa at *Epist.* 6.16.16) add to the apocalyptic effect.

In his quest for historical authenticity the Russian artist Karl Briullov made a very close study of the Vesuvius letters prior to producing his celebrated painting *The Last Day of Pompeii* (see Fig. 28.3, discussed at greater length later in this chapter). Briullov incorporated into his complex composition the moment in which the younger Pliny's mother urged her son to abandon her and save herself (Plin. *Epist.* 6.20.17, quoted above) – no doubt intended in part as an "acknowledgment" of creative debt.

Before concluding this section, something more needs to be said about the modern literary response to the Vesuvius letters. This has a rich history that spans a number of genres; as noted earlier, any writer touching on the theme of Vesuvius will have had recourse to the younger Pliny's account. Two early acts of reception are worth mentioning here. Edwin Atherstone actually included the two letters in the edition of his epic poem *The Last Days of Herculaneum* (1821), even while acknowledging in a brief introduction that they were already "in the hands of almost every reader." In this epic "we see for the first time a detailed verbal description of 'the last days' of the city in 79 CE that combines a narrative of the destructive force of Vesuvius with a series of vignettes of people caught up in the holocaust ... [though] unlike most subsequent narratives, Atherstone starts with the disaster, and only in occasional paralepses do we get a glimpse of the previous life of the city" (Daly 2015, 27). Details from the Vesuvius letters are in evidence throughout, starting with "Twas said a pine tree huge | Had been beheld on high Vesuvius' top," which is a virtual citation of the younger Pliny's description (*Epist.* 6.16.5, quoted earlier). Atherstone's innovative epic, which would prove more influential than popular, opens with a striking gesture of acknowledgment.

A particularly sophisticated act of Plinian reception is found in the "reverie" recorded in a letter of the *European Travels* collection by the British writer William Beckford (1760–1844), best known for his Gothic novel *Vathek*, but who was also a prodigious travel writer. The reverie is triggered by his visit to Pompeii, but is explicitly inspired by

and ingeniously engages with the Vesuvius letters. While lingering alone in the Temple of Isis, Beckford reports:

I fell into one of those reveries which my mind is so fond of indulging; and transporting myself seventeen hundred years back, fancied I was sailing with the Elder Pliny, on the first day's eruption from Misenum, towards Retina and Herculaneum; and afterward toward the villa of his friend Pomponianus at Stabiae.

Beckford, *European Travels*, Letter 24

As Baum (2011, 45) points out, “the remains invite the sentimental visitor to revel in morbid thoughts, reminiscent in atmosphere to a Gothic novel, and to take a trip back through time to the very moment of destruction.” But Beckford is also demonstrating the powerful nexus created by the site of Pompeii and Pliny's account of the disaster. One is struck by the chiasmic form of the imaginative operation here: from Pliny's letters to the site of Pompeii, and the Temple of Isis (where the reverie starts); then *his own letter* which in its reverie matches Pliny's and “improves” it. Beckford imagines himself on the galley with Pliny the Elder – precisely where the callow nephew should have been! And this lets him stand in momentarily as the first-person narrator that Pliny the Younger could not be. He tells us that Pompeii is seldom out of his sight – and he sees the Temple of Isis from the vessel (which is of course where he is when this reverie begins):

... methought I turned my eyes on this fair city ... and saw its distracted inhabitants, men, women, and children, running to and fro in despair. But in one spot, I mean the court and precincts of the temple, glared a continual light. It was the blaze of the altars; towards which I discerned a long-robed train of priests moving in solemn procession, to supplicate by prayer and sacrifice at this destructive moment, the intervention of Isis ...

Beckford, *European Travels*, Letter 24

So the whole imaginative process has come full circle in this ingenious “rewriting” of Pliny's first Vesuvius letter.

2 Pompeii

Pompeii was a prosperous, but not especially significant Campanian town in the early imperial period, with a population somewhere between 8000 and 12 000 total inhabitants.³ When Mount Vesuvius erupted on August 24, 79 CE, it was promptly buried, along with many of its residents, under as much as 20 feet of ash and pumice – a natural “encasement” that preserved much of what it covered in almost pristine condition. Two smaller towns, Herculaneum and Stabiae, suffered a similar demise, and a considerable area of the nearby countryside was also devastated (for the economic impact of this natural disaster, see CHAPTER 10, THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FLAVIAN RULE, section 3.2). The modern discovery and subsequent excavation of the buried city, along with its less celebrated neighbors, has proven a boon for Roman archeologists and ancient historians. Ongoing excavations reveal much concerning the lives (and deaths) of the town's inhabitants. But Pompeii has proven to be much more than this: the site itself, in conjunction with the catastrophic volcanic eruption that gave rise to it, has exerted a singular hold on the modern imagination.

Though earlier chance unearthings occurred, and extensive tunneling has been found beneath the encasement of hardened volcanic rock – some of which may date to the Flavian period, when survivors and others attempted to retrieve valuable possessions – the effective rediscovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum dates to the eighteenth century and is associated with the figure of Charles of Bourbon (properly Carlos III de Borbón). Charles became king of Naples after defeating the Austrians in 1734; in the course of preparing the foundation for a summer palace, his workmen uncovered part of Herculaneum in 1738. This prompted Charles to encourage excavation of the area, shrewdly intuiting the potential to enhance the cultural and political prestige of Naples. Ten years later, in 1748, the Spanish military engineer Rocque Joaquín de Alcubierre, working under the king's patronage, discovered Pompeii itself. From that moment through to the present day, Pompeii has been under almost continuous excavation.

For Cooley (2003), the initial archeological impetus provided by Charles “resulted in nothing more than a treasure hunt, designed primarily to enhance his international reputation and confirm his position as head of a new ruling dynasty in Naples.” Then, as in later periods, the excavation of Pompeii has been enmeshed in political contexts, often to the detriment of the site itself. In the early years, as Berry (2007, 40) points out, a considerable amount of damage was caused by haphazard digging which “uncovered, re-covered, shuffled, and re-shuffled discarded piles of detritus” thereby compromising archaeological integrity. The same scholar notes a precocious expression of concern for the recently discovered site of Herculaneum voiced by the antiquarian Horace Walpole. In a letter to Richard West (June 4, 1740), Walpole lamented that the site, deemed “one of the noblest curiosities that has ever been discovered,” lacked a judiciously chosen director to oversee and the work and document the discoveries. Walpole's invocation would be answered in 1750 when Charles placed the Swiss engineer Karl Weber in charge of the excavations of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae, a position he held until 1765. Weber was the first truly professional supervisor of excavations (as Leach has already observed in CHAPTER 18, FLAVIAN POMPEII), and his lengthy term enabled him to place the excavations on a more rigorous and systematic footing (Parslow 1995).

Walpole was among the first wave of visitors, who were mostly antiquarians and archaeologists. These were quickly joined by a less expert crowd of curiosity seekers that included poets, novelists, and painters, and it was not long before Pompeii and Herculaneum had become an essential component and inevitable highlight of the “Grand Tour” (on which see CHAPTER 27, THE FLAVIAN LEGACY, section 2.1). It has remained one of the world's most popular tourist destinations ever since. And for those who could not manage the journey to Pompeii, Pompeii increasingly came to them – in the form of exhibits, panoramas, and even “re-enactments” that became common fare in London and other major European cities of the nineteenth century.

The mystique and wonder of Pompeii has struck different chords in different cultures and periods, eliciting a variety of responses over time. But if it is a truism that every culture and period creates its own antiquity – and so its own “Pompeii” – it is nonetheless undeniable that there are strong elements of continuity in the way Pompeii has impacted the popular imagination of different Western cultures since its rediscovery. As Seydl (2012, 15) observes:

Pompeii – perhaps more intensely than any other event in the Western imagination – speaks to catastrophe laced with memory ... Pompeii is the rare universal, requiring no context to

understand the narrative. From the time news of Herculaneum's rediscovery began to leak out in the late 1730s, the cities destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius have maintained a special hold on the modern imagination, outpacing interest in the specific antiquities and archaeology of the sites and inspiring works of art from the 18th century to the present day.

The riveting hold of Pompeii on the Western imagination is worth underscoring, because for all its apocalyptic associations, the damage caused by Vesuvius was in the grand scheme of things comparatively slight. Vesuvius' eruption destroyed three unimportant towns of decidedly modest size; the economic damage, its jolting impact notwithstanding, was of an essentially transient kind. But in the Western imaginary, Pompeii, the city suddenly destroyed by the forces of nature has attained the status of an archetype (Seydl 2012, 15). It supersedes mythical disasters, such as the Fall of Troy or Atlantis, and surpasses as well historical disasters of far greater consequence. A striking testament to Pompeii's evocation of apocalyptic destruction is found in a celebrated work of science fiction, H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, whose internal narrator, fleeing from an initial wave of devastating Martian attacks, is reminded of Pompeii:

In Sunbury, and at intervals along the road, were dead bodies in contorted attitudes, horses as well as men, overturned carts and luggage, all covered thickly with black dust. That pall of cindery powder made me think of what I had read of the destruction of Pompeii.

Wells, *War of the Worlds*, bk. 2, ch. 1

Wells may have had in mind Pliny the Younger's description of the aftermath of Vesuvius, "a scene of universal change" in which "everything was buried by deep ash, as though by snow" (*Epist.* 6.20.18), or perhaps a modern account derived from it. But what is striking here is the ready association of Pompeii's plight – where the best estimates put the death toll at somewhat less than 2000⁴ – with the devastation caused by an imagined planetary invasion. Indeed, the connection of Pompeii to historical disasters of exponentially greater severity – including the two World Wars of the twentieth century and the Holocaust – appears to be an easy modern reflex.

Pompeii's apocalyptic associations received a fresh impetus in 1863 thanks to the gifted archeologist Giuseppe Fiorelli, who had been placed in charge of the excavations some three years earlier. Fiorelli realized that many of the cavities found in the volcanic rock were in fact the residual traces of human bodies that had since decomposed, and devised the procedure of injecting plaster into these cavities before removing the surrounding matter. This enabled excavators to reconstruct with eerie precision – in some cases down to expressions of terror discernable on their faces – the forms of Vesuvius' victims in the moment of death (see Fig. 28.2). These ghostly shapes created a sensation, captivating the popular imagination with their horrifying, yet spellbinding immediacy. "Each body's anonymity, its lack of known identity or biography," as Bridges (2011, 97) observes, "stimulated the desire to narrate the victim's origins, life story, or dying moments." Indeed, it was a chance precursor to these figures that provided the fictional point of departure for Théophile Gautier's *Arria Marcella* (discussed in section 2.2 of this chapter). More recently, the reconstituted figures of Vesuvius' victims were a source of fascination for Italian writer and holocaust survivor Primo Levi: the form of a girl with her head buried in her mother's



Fig. 28.2 Pompeian victim. Plaster cast of a prone woman. Antiquarium, Pompeii, Italy. Photograph courtesy of Alinari/Art Resource, New York, ART31283

breast inspired his poem *La Bambina di Pompei* (usually rendered in English as *The Girl-Child of Pompeii*).

Beyond the apocalyptic, Pompeii had, of course, a further compelling aspect: it preserved more or less intact an entire ancient city – one that had not been subsequently occupied or rebuilt. The image of Pompeii that persists in the popular imagination is that of a thriving, if somewhat decadent, town in the privileged heartland of the Roman empire that was destroyed suddenly, without warning, and thereby “frozen in time.” This is not quite the case, as scholars have long pointed out; indeed, the fallacy that the remains of any archaeological site offer a precise rendition of the material existence of a people has been dubbed the “Pompeii premise.” But such technical objections have gained little purchase with popular perceptions. Pompeii seems to sweep away intervening epochs and thereby to offer the tantalizing prospect of an unmediated contact with the quotidian reality of the ancient Roman world. It is “a powerful and evocative portal through which one might at least attempt a closer communion with the ancient past” (Hales and Paul 2011, 1). As Germaine de Staël observed:

... à Rome l'on ne trouve guère que les débris des monuments publics, et ces monuments ne retracent que l'histoire politique des siècles écoulés; mais à Pompéïa c'est la vie privée des anciens qui s'offre à vous telle qu'elle était.

de Staël, *Corinne, ou l'Italie*, bk. 11, ch. 4

In Rome you find the remains of public monuments, and these merely trace out the political history of past centuries; but at Pompeii it is the private life of the ancients just as it was that offers itself to your reflection.

The discovery of Pompeii coincided with, and was indeed a driving force behind, a “shift from public to private antiquity” (Blix 2009, 79). The lofty remoteness of an idealized antiquity, characterized by the serene perfection of white marble statues, was suddenly exposed as historical fantasy by excavations that opened new vistas on the daily reality of life in Italy during the Flavian period. In his travelog *Voyage en Italie* (1827), the French writer François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848) proclaimed the significance of Pompeii to reside in its preservation of “l’histoire domestique du peuple romain.” As Blix (2003, 295) observes, while many eighteenth-century visitors had regretted that Pompeii harbored few grandiose monuments, Chateaubriand, to the contrary, “celebrated the unlikely preservation of the fragile domestic dwellings as the true windfall of the 79 CE tragedy.” Much of what Pompeii revealed took scholars and antiquarians by surprise – as with the prominence in the religious sphere of the cult of Isis. Pompeii manifested a startling visual richness – its splendid temples, public baths, and mansions, along with the sculptures, mosaics, and paintings found in both public and private settings. To some moderns, indeed, there was a disconcerting oversupply of visual stimuli. So Goethe in his *Italienische Reise* (1817, 198) complained of an endemic and, to the modern sensibility, excessive “desire for images” (“Bilderlust eines ganzes Volkes”). Like many of his contemporaries, Goethe had difficulty reconciling his notion of Classical art with the remains of houses and the wall paintings they contained (Fitson 2011, 15). The net result was that Pompeii prompted a significant revision of both popular and expert notions of the ancient Roman world.

Pompeii triggered something else as well, a ripple of scandal arising from the discovery of numerous erotic images and objects. Much of this material was initially withheld from the public gaze – and remained sequestered for decades (Fitson 2011, 15). When finally put on display, these objects, in combination with the brothels and other evidence of what struck many contemporary Europeans as a debauched way of life, had a profound effect, establishing Pompeii in the popular imagination as a supreme embodiment of the decadence of pagan Rome. An inevitable association was made between Pompeii and Sodom and Gomorrah, biblical cities rife with sin that were duly consumed by “fire and brimstone.” Whence arose the pervasive notion of Pompeii as a corrupt and sinful pagan town whose volcanic eradication was divine punishment for its wickedness. In many romanticized paintings, particularly after the 1834 publication of Bulwer-Lytton’s novel *The Last Days of Pompeii*, Vesuvius in eruption is associated with divine retribution for human sin, and “corrupt civilization is contrasted with the purity of nature” (Sigurdsson 1999, 1326).

Perhaps the most celebrated painting of the destruction of Pompeii is Karl Briullov’s composition *The Last Day of Pompeii* (1833), now housed in the Russian State Museum, St Petersburg (see Fig. 28.3). Briullov’s initial inspiration had been Giovanni Pacini’s like-named opera, *L’ultimo Giorno di Pompeia* (libretto by Andrea Leone Tottolo), which had premiered in Naples in 1825. The striking chromatic effects of this massive canvas, along with the dramatic fear and suffering of the human figures, create a hellish scene infused with a “biblical” sense of divine punishment. Briullov had visited the



Fig. 28.3 Karl Briullov, *The Last Day of Pompeii*. 1833. Oil on canvas, 456.5 × 651 cm. Russian State Museum, St Petersburg, Russia. Photo courtesy of Scala/Art Resource, New York, ART27327

excavations at Pompeii, and was captivated not only by the buried town itself, but also by the idea of “the sudden interruption of life by this great natural catastrophe” (Sigurdsson 1999, 1326). For all its evocative associations, though, the composition did not forsake historical accuracy: Briullov examined artifacts at the Naples Museum, and made a careful study of the younger Pliny’s Vesuvius letters. *The Last Day of Pompeii* was the Russian artist’s most celebrated composition, and it quickened a trend: in Briullov’s wake Pompeii was visited by an ever-increasing stream of artists and would-be artists, drawn to the site as an evocative and sublime – not to mention profitable – subject for their compositions. Briullov’s masterpiece also inspired writers, among them Pushkin, who extolled the work in his verse, and Bulwer-Lytton.

The discovery of Pompeii impacted different European cultures at different times. In Britain, the watershed figure was the classical archaeologist and illustrator William Gell (1777–1836), author of *Pompeiana; the Topography, Edifices and Ornaments of Pompeii*, published in installments between 1817 and 1832. This was the first accurate and detailed treatment in English of the eruption of Vesuvius and the present state of excavations. This opus, which would provide the raw material from which popular guidebooks would be produced for decades to come, promptly found a broad and enthusiastic British readership. From the appearance of the first volume, “Pompeii became the most fashionable subject in literature and art” in Britain (Cunningham 2011, 354). It no doubt helped that Gell was a personal friend of Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and numerous other literary luminaries – many of whom he hosted in his Neapolitan

home and showed around the excavations. At any event, a throng of British celebrities visited Pompeii, from Shelley (1819) to Macaulay (1838) to Charles Dickens (1845; recounted in chapter 11 of *Pictures from Italy*, published the following year). The literary and artistic response to Gell's influence was prompt and enduring. John Hughes' *Pompeii, a Descriptive Ode*, was published in 1820. In 1821 Edwin Atherstone published his influential 80-page epic *The Last Days of Herculaeneum* (discussed earlier in this chapter). In 1822, John Martin, a close friend and associate of Atherstone, completed *The Destruction of Pompeii and Herculanum*, a large canvas commissioned by Richard Greville, First Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. The painting shows the two doomed cities from the vantage point of Stabiae, across the Bay of Naples. The background is dominated by Vesuvius, in eruption, which casts a red light over the entire scene. In a characteristic reflection of the contemporary archeological state of affairs, Martin includes recently excavated structures at Pompeii, including the amphitheater and the Temple of Jupiter.

Gell's most profound influence was exerted on Edward Bulwer-Lytton, whose best-selling novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) was largely written while residing with him at his home in Naples. This extended residence afforded Bulwer-Lytton convenient access to Pompeii, to say nothing of the painstaking studies, deep knowledge, and expert opinions of his host. An examination of Bulwer-Lytton's novel will be undertaken in the next section; the chapter will then conclude with a brief look at three continental works of fiction that make use of the site of Pompeii – Germaine de Staël's *Corinne, ou l'Italie*, Théophile Gautier's *Arria Marcella*, and William Jensen's novella *Gradiva*.

2.1 *The Last Days of Pompeii*

Pompeii on the eve of Vesuvius' eruption is the chosen setting for a number of historical novels, of which the first, and still the best known, is Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834). The "Last Days" tag was picked up from Edwin Atherstone's epic poem *The Last Days of Herculaeneum*; it is mediated through Karl Briullov's recently completed painting, *The Last Day of Pompeii*, which Bulwer-Lytton saw in Milan en route to Naples, and which, by all accounts, made a profound impression on him. In all three works, as Cunningham (2011, 354) observes, the term "Last Days" "loudly invoked biblical apocalypse: what happened at Pompeii and Herculanum was a foretaste of what biblical prophecy was read as foretelling for the Last Days of Time."

The Last Days of Pompeii takes as its protagonists the handsome and extravagant Greek Glaucus (whom Bulwer-Lytton makes the owner and resident of the so-called "House of the Tragic Poet," excavated in 1824). Glaucus' opulent and frivolous life amidst the local elite is thrown into confusion when he falls in love with Ione, a beautiful Neapolitan girl of Greek extraction, who is under the tutelage of the sinister Egyptian priest Arbaces. Their romance unfolds against the backdrop of Roman decadence and malign eastern cultural and religious influences. Glaucus himself is the impossible love object of Nydia, a blind slave girl from Thessaly. The complex ethnic and cultural mosaic that was Flavian Pompeii is well brought out, as is the lingering Hellenism of this area of southern Italy (which belonged to *Magna Graecia* – though Pompeii itself, unlike nearby towns such as *Neapolis* and *Cumae*, had not been founded by Greek colonists). Bulwer-Lytton also

well represents the multifaceted and dynamic religious life of Flavian Pompeii, in which Christianity is rising against a composite backdrop that includes the Roman state religion and the widespread worship of Isis. Against all odds, Glaucus and Ione survive the eruption of Vesuvius and eventually convert to Christianity.

As already noted, Bulwer-Lytton enjoyed a personal connection to William Gell, to whom the novel is dedicated. The level of archeological detail in *The Last Days of Pompeii* is a product of this connection, and frequently affords the work a didactic quality; Harrison (2011, 82–4) points to an affinity with the fictionalized historical/archeological handbook, which goes back at least to Karl August Böttiger's *Sabrina, oder Morgenszenen in Putzzimmer einer reichen Römerin* (1803). In the preface to the first edition Bulwer-Lytton remarks on the powerful “necromantic” impulse that Pompeii inspires:

... on viewing, still fresh and vivid, the houses, the streets, the temples, the theatres, of a place existing in the haughtiest age of the Roman Empire – it was not unnatural, perhaps, that a writer ... should feel a keen desire to people those deserted streets, to repair those graceful ruins, to reanimate the bones that were yet spared to his survey; to traverse the gulf of eighteen centuries, and to wake to a second existence – the City of the Dead!

For contemporary readers, the great achievement of Bulwer-Lytton's novel was indeed to bring “the City of the Dead” (an expression coined by Sir Walter Scott when visiting with Gell in 1832) back to life. The British novelist was the first to achieve, in the words of Robert-Boissier (2011, 186), “le rêve palingenesique par excellence, celui de ressusciter la vie antique, tout en recréant de toutes pièces une mythologie définitivement liée à l'histoire de Pompée” (the palingenetic dream par excellence, that of resurrecting ancient life, while recreating in intricate detail a mythology definitively linked to the history of Pompeii). In the final chapter, the author reminds his readers of the novel's necromantic mission by vaulting into the recent past to describe the skeletons of Vesuvius' victims that had been discovered at Pompeii in various locations (Daly 2015, 38).

In elaborating his narrative of the eruption itself, Bulwer-Lytton inevitably depended on the younger Pliny's Vesuvius letters, along with contemporary scientific studies. For the preceding days, Harrison (2011, 84–6) points to the influence of two ancient novels, Petronius' *Satyricon* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*; from the former, the episode of the *Cena Trimalchionis* (Trimalchio's Dinner Party) appears to have been mined with particular vigor for authenticizing details. The same scholar (2011, 88) concludes that Bulwer-Lytton “turns the fictional literature of Roman paganism, viewed as part of Rome's cultural decline, to his own antiquarian and Christian ends.”

An instant bestseller in its own day, *The Last Days of Pompeii* has for the better part of two centuries continued to attract both readers and adapters. Its immense popularity has prompted a number of theatrical adaptations, including John Buckstone's play of the same name (1835), Robert Reece's parody *The Very Last Days of Pompeii* (1872), and George Fox's opera *Nydia, the Blind Girl of Pompeii* (1892). The twentieth century saw numerous television and film adaptations of Bulwer-Lytton's novel, particularly in Italy, including one by renowned “spaghetti western” director Sergio Leone (*Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei*, 1959).

A number of subsequent novelists have followed Bulwer-Lytton's example in using Pompeii in the days leading up to Vesuvius' eruption as their narrative setting. In recent

years Robert Harris' novel *Pompeii* (2003) has enjoyed international bestseller status. *Pompeii* follows its protagonist Marcus Attilius, an *aquarius* (aqueduct engineer) as he investigates ominous developments in the days prior to the eruption of Vesuvius; it features various historical figures, including Pliny the Elder and his feckless nephew (as discussed earlier). Harris' studied reconstruction of the Flavian milieu is among the better recent examples of Flavian reception (see also the recommendation of Leach in the *Further Reading* section of CHAPTER 18, FLAVIAN POMPEII).

2.2 Corinne, Arria Marcella, and Gradiva

An altogether different, but no less popular, use of Pompeii by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century novelists is as the modern setting for a narrative. The first such work is Germaine de Staël's *Corinne, ou l'Italie* (1807), which recounts the doomed love between the passionate Corinne, a poetess living in Italy, and the reserved and melancholy British aristocrat, Lord Oswald Nelvil. The novel, which gives stark expression to the author's view of the antithetical natures of Northern and Southern Europeans, is written in a travelogue style that offers descriptions of a number of Italian locales – among them Pompeii, which, though featured only briefly in Book 11, figures importantly in the symbolic economy of the novel. As Daemmrich (1973) has argued, Pompeii, as a city of the dead, evokes and prefigures the failed relationship between Oswald and Corinne, which will end in the latter's suicide. Witucki (2011) has further suggested that in the overall scheme of the novel, which repeatedly engages with and echoes Virgil's *Aeneid*, the visit to Pompeii serves as a kind of katabasis, or descent into the underworld (which in the *Aeneid* takes place at Cumae, not far from the site of Pompeii).

More fully invested in a Pompeian setting is Théophile Gautier's *Arria Marcella: Souvenir de Pompéi*, a gothic novella first published in the *Revue de Paris* in 1852. Gautier borrowed the novella's subtitle from *Le Temple d'Isis: Souvenir de Pompéi*, a poem by his contemporary and close friend Gérard de Nerval. *Arria Marcella* belongs to the nebulous category of "fantastic" literature, which is concerned with the boundary or interface between quotidian reality and the realm of the supernatural. Gautier establishes Pompeii as a privileged location for the exploration of this mysterious interface; his novella is a kind of variation on the tale of demonic seduction, in which the seductress is not a malignant entity but rather the physical impression of the titular character, an attractive young woman who perished by the volcanic eruption that buried the city of Pompeii in 79 CE. Set in the nineteenth century, Gautier's story opens at the archaeological museum in Naples, where the protagonist Octavien and his two companions examine the archaeological finds of Pompeii. Octavien's attention is captivated by the enticing partial form of a young woman, one of the victims of Vesuvius' eruption, whose circumstances of death had preserved the imprint of her neck and breasts in quasi-sculptural form:

Ce qu'il examinait avec tant d'attention, c'était un morceau de cendre noire coagulée portant une empreinte creuse: on eût dit un fragment de moule de statue, brisé par la fonte; l'œil exercé d'un artiste y eût aisément reconnu la coupe d'un sein admirable et d'un flanc aussi pur de style que celui d'une statue grecque ...

Gautier, *Arria Marcella*

What he was examining with so much attention was a piece of coagulated black ash bearing a hollow imprint: it looked like a statue mold fragment broken by melting; the trained eye of an artist would have readily recognized in it the shape of an attractive breast and an admirable flank as pure in style as a Greek statue ...

This was not mere invention on Gautier's part: in the 1770s the skeleton of a young woman had been discovered in Pompeii, among many others, in the "Villa of Diomedes." The young woman's body had left the impression of its breasts and body shape in the matter that solidified underneath it – a fortuitous precursor, as it were, to the technique invented in the next century by Fiorelli for reconstructing the form of human victims – and this impression was in due course put on display in the Naples Museum. This remarkable form had attracted the attention of Bulwer-Lytton, who mentioned it at the conclusion of his novel in a passage from which Gautier may have drawn inspiration:

In the house of Diomed, in the subterranean vaults, twenty skeletons were discovered in one spot by the door, covered by a fine ashen dust, that had evidently been wafted slowly through the apertures until it had filled the whole space ... The sand, consolidated by damps had taken the forms of the skeletons, as in a cast; and the traveler may yet see the impression of a female neck and bosom of young and round proportions."

Bulwer-Lytton, *Last Days of Pompeii*, bk. 5, ch. 10

After leaving the museum, Octavien and his companions visit Pompeii itself, where they examine, inter alia, the "Villa of Diomedes," home of Arrius Diomedes, the presumptive father of the young woman. The same evening, Octavien returns to Pompeii by himself, and finds to his amazement that the ancient city has mysteriously come to life: the roads are full of people, the market abuzz with transactions. Octavien presently comes upon his beloved, Arria Marcella, the living woman whose partial form he had seen in the museum. At her invitation he follows her to her lavish home, where they begin to consummate their union. But they are interrupted by the sudden appearance of Arria's father, a devout follower of Christ and his new religion, who admonishes her for carnal sin, warning of punishment in the afterlife. Arria inveighs against his oppressive views; but even as Octavien clasps her in his arms, she disintegrates into ashes. The following day Octavien's friends find him unconscious, and they revive him only with great difficulty. He does not tell them of his remarkable experience; instead he vaguely explains that he experienced a lapse of consciousness, a harmless fit of some kind. But Octavien remains convinced of the reality of his experience, and Arria Marcella remains forevermore his secret love. Though he marries in due course, his wife senses that his heart belongs to another, and futilely attempts to identify her husband's lover.

In Gautier's fantastic tale, then, the beautiful young Pompeian woman who died nearly 2000 years ago appears momentarily to be reanimated, even reconstituted by Octavien's passion. As Arria herself tells him, "Ton désir m'a rendu la vie" (Your desire brought me to life). On one level, Arria herself can be seen as a metaphor for the modern "rebirth" of Pompeii; at the same time, the story embodies a familiar theme in Gautier's oeuvre, namely, the power of love to transcend the limits of temporality and reconstitute the beloved. This of course entails the reconstitution of Flavian Pompeii as well. A belief in alternate domains of reality is also expressed: "En effet, rien ne meurt, tout existe toujours; nulle force ne peut anéantir ce qui fut une fois" (Nothing dies; everything

exists for all time: no force can annihilate what once was). As he did in his earlier novella *Le Roman de la Momie*, in *Arria Marcella* Gautier has reached back through the centuries to resurrect in a convincing fashion an ancient civilization – but now focusing on the private lives of historically inconsequential individuals (which relates to the aforementioned shift in focus, in which Pompeii was heavily implicated, from “public” to “private” antiquity).

Gautier’s anti-Christian sentiment constitutes a noteworthy reversal of Bulwer-Lytton’s treatment. In *Arria Marcella* the French novelist celebrates the worldview of ancient Roman paganism, while lamenting its demise under the pressure of Christianity, which is already felt in Pompeii’s final days. Gautier achieves an eroticization of the Roman world that exploits “a Christian technique that sought to denigrate pagan practice by associating it with sin, especially bodily sexual sin” (Blanshard 2010, 5).

A rather similar initial premise drives the action of William Jensen’s novella *Gradiva: Ein pompejanisches Phantasiestück* (*Gradiva: a Pompeian Fantasy*), published in 1903. As in *Arria Marcella*, the protagonist undergoes a kind of hallucinatory experience that transports him to Pompeii in 79 CE, in the days before the eruption of Vesuvius. And Jensen also follows Gautier in having the experience triggered by the fetishistic obsession with the likeness of a Pompeian woman – though in this case the likeness takes the form of a work of art, a bas-relief sculpture. Like Gautier, Jensen seems to affirm the central position of ancient Rome in the sexual fantasies of modern European culture.

Jensen’s protagonist is Norbert Hanold, a young German archaeologist, who has a plaster cast of the bas-relief in his study. It depicts a young woman walking, whom Norbert names “Gradiva” (related to the Latin verb *gradior*, to walk) and with whom he becomes obsessed. Norbert comes to believe that the subject of the sculpture is a Pompeian of Greek origins. He visits Pompeii, in the hope of identifying her home. A powerful, inexplicable emotional response while examining the “House of Meleager” convinces him that this was Gradiva’s home. Norbert then comes upon Zoe Bertgang, a forgotten friend of his childhood, who happens to be visiting the city with a group of German tourists. Seeing the beautiful motion of Zoe’s walk, Norbert lapses into a delusional state whereby he believes Zoe to be Gradiva, or, more precisely, her ghost. Zoe, who grasps the nature of his delusion, helps Norbert to understand his condition, and, in time, to see her for who she is. Norbert thus ends up finding Zoe through the image of Gradiva and is thereby restored to a healthy psychological condition (they marry at the end of the novella). The name Zoe (Greek for “life”) evokes her “revivifying” power over Norbert (reinforced by her father’s profession as zoologist), while the word itself suggests her suitability for an archaeologist (especially one linked to a Hellenized site of southern Italy). Indeed, the implication of all this is that Norbert’s career choice is intimately tied to his repressed childhood love for a neighboring girl, and yields a substitute object that becomes an obsession and hence the means by which he retrieves his childhood love.

Gradiva, which enjoyed considerable popularity upon publication, was given a further boost when Sigmund Freud provided a detailed analysis of it in *Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens Gradiva* (*Delusion and Dream in Jensen’s Gradiva*, 1907). For Freud, the landscape of Pompeii in *Gradiva* functions as a metaphor for the unconscious. This provided a neat psychoanalytical correlation to the timeless mystery and allure of Pompeii, with Freud affirming that “there is no more apt analogy for repression, by

which something in the mind is made inaccessible and yet preserved, than burial of the sort to which Pompeii fell victim, and from which it could only re-emerge through the work of spades.” It was his reading of *Gradiya* that famously inspired Freud to develop the archeological metaphor for the psychology of the subconscious.

NOTES

- 1 Cf. Dio Cass. 66.23.5 (of the reaction at Rome to the volcanic ash that filled the sky): “There too there was considerable fear for several days, since the people did not know and could not understand what was happening, but, like those near Vesuvius, believed that the world was being overturned, so that the sun was disappearing in the earth, and the earth was being lifted into the sky.”
- 2 The authority of Pliny’s Vesuvius letters is also due to the shortage of rival accounts. Aside from brief references by contemporary poets (Val. Fl. 4.507–11; Mart. *Ep.* 4.44; Stat. *Silv.* 4.4.78–86) and passing references in Josephus (*AJ* 20.141) and Suetonius (*Tit.* 8.3), the next surviving account is that of Dio Cassius (66.21–4), who was writing a century and a half after the fact. Dio’s report on the eruption itself is an incoherent blend of the mythological and historic, though he does usefully report that volcanic ash from Vesuvius “reached Africa and Syria and Egypt, and it also reached Rome, filling the air overhead and darkening the sun” (66.23.4).
- 3 Lazer (2009, 73–6) offers a helpful overview of the scholarly debate over the population of Pompeii in the Flavian period.
- 4 Lazer (2009, 76–8) again offers a helpful overview of the scholarly debate.

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FURTHER READING

The last few decades have seen a remarkable upsurge in publications on Vesuvius and Pompeii, many of them aimed at the non-specialist reader. Berry (2007) provides a helpful general survey, outlining the story of Pompeii and its rediscovery, but focusing more on what is known about life and the people of the town in the period prior to the eruption. Beard (2008), focusing somewhat more on the rediscovery, is another accessible account. Parslow (1995) constructs a history of the discovery and early excavation of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae around the biography of Karl Weber, the first systematic and properly "professional" supervisor of excavations. Cooley (2003) offers an insightful history of the responses to Pompeii, considering in particular the ways that interpretation of the site has been influenced by politics as well as by advances in scientific knowledge. Harris (2007) is another valuable survey of modern responses, with particularly rich discussions of the site's manipulation by such prominent figures as Napoleon and Mussolini. Hales and Paul (2011) contains

a number of interesting essays (several of which are cited in this chapter) on how the dead city has impacted the modern imagination. Gardner Coates, Lapatin, and Seydl (2012), a catalog from the exhibition *The Last Days of Pompeii: Decadence, Apocalypse, Resurrection*, provides a rich visual inventory as it self-consciously explores – while continuing to exploit – the popular associations that have made Pompeii a perennially alluring theme.

CHAPTER 29

Reception of Flavian Literature

Andrew Zissos

Introduction

The Flavian Age was a period rich in literary production, the bulk of which, as is true for any age of antiquity, has not survived (see CHAPTER 26, LOST LITERATURE). On the other hand, a substantial amount has been preserved: the Flavian Age has bequeathed to posterity more works of literature than other post-Augustan periods. Because of this abundance it is impossible to deal exhaustively with the reception of all extant Flavian literature; this chapter will accordingly limit itself to a selection of authors writing in Latin: the poets Martial and Statius, and the prose writers Pliny the Elder and Quintilian. This linguistic selectivity will allow greater depth of coverage and afford a measure of cohesion, but entails the omission of important Greek-language writers such as Plutarch (whose literary career begins in the Flavian period) and Josephus (aspects of whose reception have, however, already been addressed in CHAPTER 27, THE FLAVIAN LEGACY). It should be borne in mind that the reception of literature written in Greek was, at least in the West, hampered by the language of composition itself. In the Middle Ages, Greek was almost completely lost in Europe, where medieval classicism was almost exclusively Latin. The recovery of Greek in the Renaissance was slow and laborious, so that many scholars and writers, to say nothing of readers, lacked competence in the language. It should of course also be recalled that Latin itself had ceased to be a spoken language by the end of the first millennium: its displacement by the vernacular languages in what had been the Western Roman Empire complicates the process of the reception of classical Latin literature. Over time, Latin lost ground as a reading language as well, so that, with the passing of successive centuries, it became ever more necessary to produce translations in the modern vernacular languages if classical Latin works were to find a wide audience. Thus the history of translation of a given work becomes an important component – and meaningful gauge – of its later reception.

A number of the surviving works of Flavian Latin literature have enjoyed immense prestige in later periods, and have exerted a profound influence on subsequent Western culture. It must be acknowledged, though, that not all Flavian writers have retained the

same strong association with their own times as have, say, Horace, Virgil, and Ovid with the Augustan Age or Seneca and Lucan with the Age of Nero; and this is especially the case for prose authors. That few modern readers think of Quintilian or Frontinus as specifically *Flavian* writers tells us something about the nature of Flavian literature itself, that it is on the whole somewhat more chronologically “detached” than the work of some other eras. In writing his encyclopedic *Natural History*, Pliny the Elder produced a literary work that was, in essence a vast compendium of information, the bulk of which had been established prior to the Flavian period. Likewise, Flavian epic takes Greek mythological tales (Statius, Valerius Flaccus) or distant Roman history (Silius Italicus) as its subject matter, so that its narratives are, at least on the face of it, somewhat removed from the realities of contemporary Rome, and so tended not to convey a strong sense of the Flavian Age as such to readers in later epochs. These epics are also marked by a neo-classicizing tendency, sometimes characterized as a “return to Virgil,” that again obscures, at least to a degree, their relationship to the period in which they were composed.

1 Latin poetry

A considerable influence has been exerted on later literature by Latin poetry of the Flavian Age, particularly in the case of Martial’s *Epigrams* and Statius’ two finished works, the *Silvae* and the epic *Thebaid*. Valerius Flaccus’ epic *Argonautica* has not enjoyed the same celebrity and influence as the *Thebaid*, but has nonetheless had a more vigorous literary reception than is often acknowledged; Silius Italicus’ lengthy *Punica*, easily the most maligned of the Flavian epics, has also found a smattering of advocates and imitators over the centuries (neither the *Argonautica* nor the *Punica* will be specifically addressed here; for studies of their reception, see *Further Reading* at the end of this chapter). All three major Flavian epics have suffered in different periods from their close relationship to their supreme poetic model, Virgil’s *Aeneid* – a relationship that led to dismissal of these works as “epigonal” for the better part of the twentieth century. The inferiority implicit in the designation “Silver Age” which applies to Neronian and Flavian literature in particular, sets the tone. On such a view, one need only measure the extent of the fall from the artistic perfection of the “Golden Age,” of which Virgil was the preeminent representative. Recent scholarship has gone some way to challenging such views; Bernstein’s opening observation (CHAPTER 22, EPIC POETRY) might well be generalized: these are felicitous times for reading Flavian poetry.

1.1 *Martial*

Perhaps more completely than any other ancient poet, Martial reports on his own contemporary reception – including the geographic sway of his fame, his healthy sales volume, poems plagiarized or falsely attributed (certainly a kind of reception). He boasts of the popularity of his epigrams with contemporary readers and styles himself as widely read in both Rome and the provinces (*Ep.* 5.13.16, 6.60). Following his death in 104, Pliny the Younger wrote an obituary notice praising the epigrammist for his perceptiveness and wit, but doubting that his poetry would last long enough to impact posterity

(*homo ingeniosus acutus acer ... at non erunt aeterna quae scripsit*, *Epist.* 3.21.1–6). Few predictions have been more off the mark: Martial proved to be one of antiquity's most influential – and controversial – poets. His impact on the development of epigram in western literature towers over that of all others. The poet's influence was felt in the Carolingian revival, the Italian and French Renaissance, the Spanish Golden Age, and early modern English and German poetry, to name just the principle movements of his reception.

One key to Martial's popularity through changing eras and cultures was the immense thematic variety of his poetic output. Perhaps more than any other ancient poet, Martial's poetic output provoked a protean reception whereby different aspects of his poetry won the admiration of successive waves of readers. These conceived of him in various positive guises – as a stinging wit, a social critic, a moralist. At the same time, an issue that complicated Martial's reception almost from the outset, and became especially acute with the rise of Christianity, was his relatively frequent use of obscenity (on which see CHAPTER 23, EPIGRAM AND OCCASIONAL POETRY, section 5). The singular capacity of Martial's poetry to cause offense has meant that his reception – and more fundamentally his reputation – has been more immediately contingent upon and conditioned by the prevailing social values of the particular cultures and epochs of his readers. For the affronted there were of course remedies other than blanket rejection. Offending poems could, for example, be excluded from the process of transmission by the copyist. Likewise, anthologies offered the simple expedient of excluding the offending poems from one's selection. For those not excluding obscene epigrams, it was always possible to omit sexual or otherwise offensive terms or phrases. Bowdlerized editions of Martial's *Epigrams*, the first of which was published in Antwerp in 1568, have outnumbered intact editions in many modern eras. Such endeavors, appropriately enough, often prompted scathing epigrammatic responses, as with John Donne (1572–1631), who characterized Mattheus Raderus, the editor of one such tome, as having “gelded Martiall.” Such protests notwithstanding, it remained true for centuries that large communities of readers were afforded selective glimpses of Martial.

Martial remained widely read throughout antiquity, exerting influence upon both pagan and Christian writers. Juvenal, who knew Martial in person, repeatedly used motifs from the *Epigrams* in his *Satires* (Colton 1991). He was especially drawn to the witty concluding twist to many of Martial's epigrams, which came to be known as the “point,” and relied so heavily on Martial's wit and observation, that full understanding of Juvenal requires a thorough knowledge of Martial (Sullivan 1987, 22). Martial's reception in late antiquity remained surprisingly robust, even if many, such as the fifth-century ecclesiastical writer Marius Mercator, took exception to his obscenity. Martial's influence is evident in the poetry of Claudian and Ausonius, as well as Sidonius Apollinaris and the Vandal encomiast Luxorius in the fifth century, and Venantius Fortunatus in the sixth. Although Martial himself considered epigram and satire to be distinct literary genres (*Ep.* 12.94.7–9), the latter was effectively subsumed by the former in late antiquity, and Sidonius Apollinaris' encapsulation *mordax sine fine Martialis* (“the endlessly acid-tongued Martial,” *Carm.* 9.268) suggests that Martial came to be regarded as an exemplar of the satirical epigram.

Martial was not a curriculum author in the Middle Ages, and his poetry seems to have enjoyed a somewhat restricted circulation: there are only about 15 medieval manuscripts.

Early medieval writers demonstrating familiarity with Martial's poetry are most likely to have known him via anthologies. Martial's literary presence registered in the Carolingian Renaissance (late eighth and ninth centuries), whose renewal of the classical tradition included epigram and occasional verse, written for both the Church and the imperial court. In the later Middle Ages, the moralizing aspect of Martial's poetry came to the fore. Godfrey of Winchester (d. 1107) drew inspiration from Martial in writing his book of moral epigrams, composed in Latin, the *Liber Proverbiorum* (Maaz 1992). Indeed Godfrey's work was often confused with Martial's: the *Liber Proverbiorum* is sometimes attributed to the Flavian epigrammist in manuscripts, added as a fifteenth book to the genuine corpus. Walter Map's *De Nugis Curialium* (twelfth century), a wide-ranging – and gossip-laden – collection of anecdotes, written in a satirical vein, draws upon Martial for quotations and sometimes imitates his formulations.

It was in the Renaissance that Martial first emerged as a true literary colossus. The rise of humanism afforded his epigrams a new currency, and for many Martial's scathing attention to the vices of imperial Rome spoke meaningfully to their own times. To be sure, Martial was not the only epigrammatist to have survived from antiquity – Catullus for one constituted a formidable rival – but he quickly became the preeminent model. The enthusiasm of Boccaccio, who cites Martial on numerous occasions, unquestionably helped to galvanize Italian humanists, and create an enduring vogue. In the following century many prominent humanists, including Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494), would try their hand at composing epigrams in Latin, taking Martial as their chief inspiration. In some literary circles Martial's obscenity was a cause for embarrassment, but for many it was integral to his poetics, and fully worthy of emulation. An early humanist poet from Sicily, Antonio Becadelli (also known as “il Panormita”) created a sensation with his notorious *Hermaphroditus*, a collection of 81 obscene epigrams published around 1425, that drew inspiration from Martial. In the wake of Becadelli, a number of poets of the fifteenth and sixteenth century took to writing ribald epigrams, generally in overt affiliation with Martial.

Of course not everybody admired Martial, even in the Renaissance. The Venetian Andrea Navagero (1483–1529) is said ceremoniously to have burned copies of Martial's poetry each year on a day dedicated to the Muses. Martial also provoked the censure of Enea Silvio Piccolomi (later Pope Pius II) who characterized him as *penitiosus* (pernicious) in a treatise on education. But such views failed to gain traction with the bulk of Renaissance readers. Martial's immense popularity in this period is reflected in the fact that he was one of the first authors to be printed. The *editio princeps* (first printed edition) was probably that of Sweynheym and Pannartz, which appeared in Rome around 1470. Likewise, the first print commentary, written by Domiziano Calderini, appeared only a few years later in 1474.

The Welsh poet John Owen (1564–1622) was one of the last major Neo-Latin poets to emulate Martial. He published three volumes of epigrams in Latin (1606–12), which were so successful that he was nicknamed the “British Martial.” But even with the fading of the Renaissance, and with Latin gradually losing currency as a contemporary poetic language, Martial's popularity and influence endured. He continued to provide the essential thematic, stylistic, and theoretical underpinnings for the composition of epigrams from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Indeed, as the genre of epigram, increasingly composed in vernacular languages, reached its zenith in this period, Martial's

reception reached its most expansive phase. This was particularly true in Britain, where poets from Ben Jonson to Alexander Pope imitated him and sought to reproduce in English language and meter the effects of concision and point he had perfected (Conte 1987, 510). Martial's peculiar popularity in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain is attributed by Sullivan (1987, 25) in no small part to the emergence of the amateur poet:

It was a perfect time for the short poem, specifically the epigram as now popularly conceived, to come into its own. And a long list could be compiled of writers whose chosen genre was the short, ingenious, witty poem, whether dedicatory or derisory, sentimental or sententious, amorous or invidious, directed at the living or the dead, the real or the fictitious. Among the more distinguished practitioners were Sir John Davies; Sir John Denham; John Donne; Sir John Harrington; John Heywood; Henry Howard, earl of Surrey; Mathew Prior; John Wilmot, earl of Rochester; and Sir Henry Wotton. For one who took to the writing of short poems or epigrams, Martial was clearly the ancient epigrammatist par excellence ... So Martial became to epigram what Ovid was to love poetry, Horace to lyric, and Virgil to epic.

Martial's impact in this period was almost as profound outside Britain. Indeed, it would scarcely be an exaggeration to state that he was the decisive influence on the development of epigram in the national literatures of almost every European country. He remained firmly ensconced in the literary pantheon through the end of the eighteenth century.

A seminal moment in Martial's reception came in the eighteenth century, when the celebrated Enlightenment writer and critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing expounded a theory of the epigram in the essay "Zerstreute Anmerkungen über das Epigramm und einige der vornehmsten Epigrammatisten" ("Scattered notes on the epigram and some of the most distinguished epigrammatists," 1771). Lessing characterized the epigram as, ideally, a brief poem on a single topic that exhibits a bipartite structure. The first part, the "set-up" (*Erwartung*), arouses the reader's curiosity, while the second, the "resolution" (*Aufschluss*), satisfies that curiosity by way of a brief, generally witty, comment thereon. By this standard, Lessing concluded, Martial was the preeminent ancient exponent of the genre. Lessing's was certainly not the only theory – his compatriot Gottfried Herder for one promptly put forward a rival view – but it was the most influential and enduring, and it did much to enshrine Martial atop the genre's pantheon.

The last major pre-Romantic poets to be influenced by Martial were Goethe and Schiller, who in 1796 published *Die Xenien*. This was a large collection of satirical epigrams in the style of Martial's *Xenia* (the thirteenth book of his *Epigrams*) in which the two friends began by lambasting opposing critics, but soon expanded their brief to target contemporary literature and politics, and much more besides. But Martial's zenith had now passed, and his popularity – and that of the genre of epigram more broadly – began to ebb. As Conte (1987, 510) observes, "with the collapse of aristocratic society and the unprecedented expansion of the reading public, the genre of epigram, together with the conditions upon which it had depended, declined." The advent of Romanticism, itself a reaction to aristocratic social norms and aesthetic categories, contributed to Martial's decline. The movement's emphasis on depth and sincerity of feeling, its privileging of the sublime, and its commitment to discursive elaboration were fundamentally incompatible

with the pithiness and detachment, as well as the often cynical tone of Martial's epigrams. In Britain the downturn in Martial's fortunes was quickened in the nineteenth century, when Victorian sensibilities rekindled long sublimated abhorrence of the Flavian poet's obscenity. No less damning to his reputation was the focus of hostile critics on Martial's perceived sycophancy, his apparently servile flattery of the rich and powerful. Macaulay's epistolary verdict on the epigrammatist well represents contemporary sentiment: "besides his indecency, his mendicancy and servility disgust me".

Though never regaining its former stature, Martial's poetry enjoyed a significant rehabilitation in the post-Romantic period. Ezra Pound (1885–1972) was Martial's most prominent modernist champion, esteeming the Flavian poet above all for his economy of language, his elegance, and his stinging wit. Pound also saw in some of Martial's shorter epigrams paradigms for the imagism of which he was himself an important exponent. The influence of Martial is most evident in the volume *Lustra*, which features short satirical poems that mock contemporary society and its conventions.

1.2 Statius

Statius' poetry has exerted a profound influence on subsequent western literature, though, much like Martial's, it has not resonated with equal force in all periods and cultures. His reception reached its zenith in the medieval period, even if his influence continued to be felt thereafter, particularly in the English literary tradition. The roll call of writers who admired and drew upon Statius' poetry is an impressive one, including Dante, Chaucer, Spenser, and Pope.

From Statius we have three extant works: the *Silvae*, five books of occasional verse in various meters, published from 92 onwards; the *Thebaid*, an epic account of the civil war between Oedipus' sons Polynices and Eteocles, probably published in 91; and the *Achilleid*, an unfinished epic on the life of Achilles. For reasons of economy, the present analysis will limit itself to reception of Statius' two finished works. The fortune of the incomplete *Achilleid* in many respects follows that of the *Thebaid* in a lesser key.

Silvae

Though Statius was clearly a popular author in his own day (see later in this section), there is scant evidence for widespread reading of or literary engagement with any of his works in the two or three centuries following his death. Perhaps, as Dewar (1991, xxxvii) suggests, he suffered from his close association with Domitian: unlike Martial, he did not outlive the last Flavian emperor, and so had no opportunity to recant his adulatory verse after Domitian's assassination and *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory). By the late fourth century, though, his influence registers more forcefully, with panegyric and occasional poetry often bearing a strong Statian imprint, and the *Silvae* providing a benchmark and offering a rich variety of models for imitation. For Conte (1987, 483), it is the ornamental character of the *Silvae*, their "rhetoric of sweetness" that accounts for their emulation by a number of mannerist court poets. The most important of these is Claudian (circa 370–404), court poet at Mediolanum (Milan) under the emperor Honorius and his minister Stilicho, for whom he composed a series of panegyrics and other poems. Claudian's compositions often draw inspiration from the *Silvae* on both

the stylistic and thematic levels. To take just one example, Claudian's *Carmen 7* (*De quadriga marmorea*), a short ecphrastic poem in dactylic hexameter that exalts the skill with which a chariot and its horses have been carved from a single block of marble, owes a pervasive but scattered debt of inspiration to a number of the *Silvae*, starting with 4.6, an ecphrasis and encomium of Vindex' statue of Hercules (Zeiner 2005, 2). The fourth-century poet Ausonius, resident of Burdigala (modern Bordeaux) in Gaul, a keen reader of earlier poets, was no less strongly influenced by Statius. Indeed, Statius' influence on Ausonius is only clearly surpassed by that of Virgil. Ausonius frequently draws inspiration from the *Silvae* and does so on various levels – on the level of phraseology, of conceits and motifs, and of theme. So, for example, in describing the villas on the banks of the Mosella in his eponymous poem, Ausonius borrows freely from Statius' accounts of the magnificent villas of his patrons in the *Silvae* (Pavlovskis 1973, 36–7). In some cases he directly models whole passages on Statian precursors (for example, *Mos.* 170–5 ~ *Silv.* 2.2.100–6; *Mos.* 287–97 ~ *Silv.* 1.3.27–31). The fifth-century senatorial poet (and Christian bishop in Roman Gaul) Sidonius Apollinaris was another enthusiastic imitator of Statius; Sidonius, as Vessey (1973, 31) well puts it, “reveled in Statian mannerism.” Statius is sometimes overtly acknowledged as preeminent model and source of inspiration, as when Sidonius refers with fond reverence to the “the bejeweled meadows of the little *Silvae*” (*gemmea prata silvularum*, *Carm.* 9.229).

Unlike Statius' two epics, the *Silvae* lapsed into obscurity after the early Middle Ages and remained largely unknown until the Renaissance. It is clear that neither Dante nor Chaucer, both enthusiasts of Statius' epics, knew of his occasional poetry. The *Silvae* remained almost completely unknown until their discovery at an unspecified location near Lake Constanze by the celebrated manuscript hunter Poggio Bracciolini in 1417 (among the other texts discovered by Poggio on this trip was Silius' *Italicus' Punica*, unknown to that point). All the extant manuscripts of the *Silvae* depend on a copy of Poggio's codex. In the wake of Poggio's discovery, the *Silvae* quickly vaulted back into literary consciousness. As he had for Martial's poetry, the humanist scholar-poet Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) played a key role in the popularization of the *Silvae* (van Dam 2008). He obtained a copy of Poggio's manuscript and produced an important commentary containing both textual and literary criticism. Poliziano also chose the *Silvae* as the subject for his first course as a professor, and indeed for his inaugural lecture, in which he importantly connected them to remarks in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*. Poliziano also composed his own Latin poems in imitation of Statius, entitled *Sylvae*. He thereby established a convention of using the designation “*Sylvae*” for collections of occasional poetry. Two notable seventeenth-century adherents of this practice are the literary scholar Hugo Grotius who composed, along with an edition of and commentary on the *Silvae*, a panegyric collection of *Sylvae* that engages closely with Statius' poetry, and John Dryden, who composed a collection of poetical miscellanies with the same title. In the wake of Poliziano, Statius' *Silvae* enjoyed immense prestige among scholars, who produced a steady stream of editions and commentaries, as well as among poets. In Italy celebrated figures such as Lorenzo de' Medici, Bernardo Tasso, Luigi Alamanni, and Teofilo Folengo produced their own collections in imitation of the *Silvae* (Zeiner 2005, 4). The popularity of the *Silvae* gradually spread outside Italy as well. A number of sixteenth-century Spanish authors produced their own poetic collections that were inspired by, and directly engaged with the *Silvae*. But perhaps the greatest

influence exerted by Statius' *Silvae* was on the Spanish humanist and poet Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645), whose work manifests an abiding fascination with their generic diversity and “Silver” Latinity. Quevedo draws upon the themes, style and even vocabulary of Statius for his own *Silvas*, a collection of 36 poems covering a variety of subjects and meters (Zeiner 2005, 4). Beyond Statius' importance as a model for Quevedo, he also stands as the decisive influence in the development of the Spanish “silva” as a genre of the Baroque period (Kallendorf and Kallendorf 2000).

Thebaid

In contrast to the sporadic pattern of reception of the *Silvae*, Statius' epics have enjoyed centuries of largely uninterrupted readership, from late antiquity through to the present day. Statius himself believed that his prospects for poetic immortality rested chiefly on his *Thebaid*, an epic in 12 books that was said to be 12 years in the writing (*Theb.* 12.811–12). His belief was prescient, as the poem would have a profound and enduring impact on subsequent western literature. The *Thebaid*, which was recited in installments as it was composed, appears instantly to have been acknowledged as an “classic”: in the *envoi* Statius mentions that it was already being read and memorized by school children (*Theb.* 12.815–6). Elsewhere he proudly mentions the discerning audiences, senators prominent in them, attending his public recitations (*Silv.* 5.2.160–3). The success of his recitations of the *Thebaid* is corroborated by Juvenal:

curritur ad vocem iucundam et carmen amicae
Thebaidos, laetam cum fecit Statius urbem
promisitque diem: tanta dulcedine captos
adficit ille animos tantaque libidine volgi
auditur ...

Juv. *Sat.* 7.82–6

They run to hear [Statius'] pleasant voice and their favorite poem, the *Thebaid*, when Statius has cheered the whole city by setting the day [sc. for a recitation]; he captures their minds with such sweetness, and the crowd listens to him with such pleasure ...

After a seemingly muted reception in the first two or three centuries after Statius' death, the *Thebaid* emerged more clearly in later antiquity as the classic its author had proclaimed it to be. The poetry of Claudian in particular “is pervaded by borrowings and adaptations of diction, phrases, lines, ideas, and images from the *Thebaid*” (Parkes 2012, xxxiv). Other late-antique poets engaging with the *Thebaid* include Ausonius, Dracontius, Sidonius Apollonaris, and Venantius Fortunatus. The popularity and prestige of Statius' epics in late antiquity is evident from the fact that they, like the poetry of Virgil, attracted the scrutiny of learned commentators. A commentary ascribed to a certain Lactantius Placidus is preserved, perhaps dating to the fifth century. Its notes (*scholia*) on points of diction, mythography, and the like are characteristic of the genre in this period.

The continued appeal and robust circulation of the *Thebaid* in the Middle Ages is indicated by the existence of more than 160 medieval manuscripts. The *Thebaid*, indeed, enjoyed its highest level of popularity in the later Middle Ages, from about the tenth century onwards. It appears to have been widely used as a medieval school text, and glosses in a twelfth-century manuscript, which engage with the *scholia* attributed

to Lactantius, point to ongoing scholarly interest. Imitation of both of Statius' epics becomes widespread in both Latin and vernacular poetry. Of Statius' Latin imitators, the English poet Joseph of Exeter, was among the most sensitive and intelligent: his late twelfth-century epic *Bellum Troianum* is shot through with verbal echoes and sustained imitation of the *Thebaid* (Dewar 1991, xxxix–xl).

Unlike Martial's *Epigrams*, Statius' own *Silvae* (essentially unknown in this period), and other Latin epics from antiquity, the *Thebaid* expressed a religious worldview that was in fundamental respects congruent with medieval Christian beliefs. The ease with which it could be interpreted as a Christian allegory is seen in the *Super Thebaiden* of pseudo-Fulgentius, datable to the twelfth or thirteenth century, in which Statius' mythic tale has become a full-blown *psychomachia* (Dewar 1991, xlii–xliii). Less willful readers were drawn to the epic's allegorical personifications, and found obvious points of contact in its stark moral conflict between the forces of good on Olympus and those of evil in the Underworld (Conte 1987, 487). As a result, the *Thebaid* was the only post-Augustan epic to engender its own tradition in the Middle Ages (Battles 2004, 1). That tradition would pass through the Old French *Roman de Thèbes* (a poem in octosyllabic couplets written around 1150) to include Dante, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and John Lydgate.

The richest and most sophisticated act of reception of Statius' *Thebaid* is that of Dante's *Divina Commedia* (written circa 1309–1320). Already in the *Convivio* (written circa 1304–1307) Statius was Dante's *dolce poeta* (sweet poet, 4.25.6, possibly recalling *Juv.* 7.84 *tanta dulcedine*). In the *Commedia*, Dante repeatedly demonstrates his profound admiration for the *Thebaid*, sometimes ventriloquized through the guide Virgil, who was, of course, Statius' supreme and unreachable poetic model (*Theb.* 12.816–7): Dante in this sense follows on from Statius' own engagement with and recapitulation of prior classical texts. Dante was thoroughly versed in the *Thebaid*, and engaged with it in a comprehensive manner. As Lewis (1959, 135) observes, every major character in the *Thebaid* finds a mention in the *Commedia*, whether treated directly, featured in similes, or used as a model for one of Dante's own *dramatis personae*. Of the latter category, a notorious case in point is Count Ugolino, who in Canto 33 of *Inferno* gnaws the head of his enemy Ruggieri, a grotesque replay of Tydeus' cannibalism at *Theb.* 8.751–66. But the most striking contribution of the *Commedia* to the reception of Statius resides in the presence of the Flavian poet himself as a prominent narrative character, a figure endowed with symbolic significance in his own right, much like Dante's Virgil. Statius is thus as forceful a presence in the *Divina Commedia* as are his themes and ideas. Dante has the Flavian poet introduce himself by way of his two epics, the *Thebaid* and the incomplete *Achilleid*:

Stazio la gente ancor di là mi noma:
Cantai di Tebe, e poi del grande Achille,
Ma caddi in via con la seconda soma.
Dante, *Purg.* 21.91–3

Over there the people still call me Statius; I sang of Thebes and then of great Achilles; but I fell on the way with the second load [i.e. I died before completing the second poem.]

Statius is the first poet encountered in *Purgatorio* – where of course only Christians could reside. In accordance with a medieval legend, Dante's Statius declares that he

secretly converted to Christianity after reading Virgil's fourth *Eclogue* (which was regarded in the Middle Ages as a prediction of the birth of Christ). Pervasive medieval ignorance of the *Silvae*, which would have attested to Statius' life as a pagan living in Rome, was crucial for the propagation of this biographical fantasy. Dante's Statius thus attributes both his poetic and religious identity to Virgil (*per te poeta fui, per te cristiano, Purg.* 22.73): he becomes a kind of illumined Virgil, serving as the pilgrim's guide in *Purgatorio*, much as Virgil had done in *Inferno*, as they travel upward towards earthly paradise. In a broad sense, as Ross (2007, xxiii) puts it, "the role of Statius expresses Dante's view that Latin poetry provided a providential vision to guide the might of the Roman empire towards Christianity."

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375) was another enthusiastic reader of Statius. Already with his prose romance *Filocolo* (composed circa 1335–1336 and regarded as the first Italian novel written in prose), Boccaccio can be seen aligning himself with Statius and Dante; but it is with the *Teseida* (composed circa 1339–1341), an epic poem in 12 books, that he undertakes a full engagement with the *Thebaid*, producing an inventive new entry in the tradition of Theban narratives spawned by Statius' epic. The *Teseida* is a kind of sequel to the *Thebaid*, set in the aftermath of Theseus' attack on Thebes (the closing sequence of Statius' narrative). From the third book onwards the principal characters are Arcita and Palemone, members of the Theban royal family and rivals for the love of Emilia. Thus, the grim themes of fraternal strife and civil war, the essential matter of Statius' narrative, are displaced by the dynamics of erotic rivalry regulated by the medieval chivalric code. Fundamental to Boccaccio's ameliorative recasting of Thebes is the figure of Theseus, the city's conqueror, presented as a paradigm of magnanimous kingship, the very embodiment of the theme of reconciliation replacing discord (Philips 2010, 10). The intertextual engagement with Statius is inventive and multifaceted: Anderson (1988, 69) points to Boccaccio's use of Hypsipyle's narrative in *Thebaid* 5 (in which the Lemnian women massacre their menfolk and are later subdued by the Argonauts) as a template for his episode of Theseus and the Amazons in the opening book of the *Teseida*.

Of medieval English writers, it was Chaucer (circa 1342–1400) who was Statius' most thoughtful reader. He engaged with Statius' epic over a long period, most significantly in the *Knight's Tale*, *Anelida and Arcite* (an early version of *The Knight's Tale*), *Troilus and Criseyde*, and *The Legend of Good Women*, as modern scholarship has amply documented (Gillespie 1999, 159). Chaucer inscribes himself with particular care within the poetic tradition spawned by Statius' *Thebaid*. This self-positioning finds its most ingenious expression in the appearance of the story of Thebes in Chaucer's work as a text that the characters themselves either read or rewrite. So in Book 2 of *Troilus and Criseyde*, Criseyde is interrupted reading the *Roman de Thèbes* at the point when Amphiaras is swallowed by a chasm in the earth (a reworking of the celebrated episode from *Thebaid* 7), and episodes from the *Thebaid* itself dominate Cassandra's "olde stories" in Book 5. Indeed, a summary of the plot of the *Thebaid* is provided at 5.1485–1512. The *Troilus and Criseyde* closes its narrative on a conspicuously Statian note, with Chaucer addressing his "litel book" and urging humility:

And kiss the steppes where as thou seest pace,
Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.
Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* 5.1791–2

This deferential gesture is an amplification of Statius' closing address to his just-completed epic:

... nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta
sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora.
Stat. *Theb.* 12.816–17

Do not attempt to rival the divine *Aeneid*, but rather follow at a distance, and always revere its footsteps.

A fundamental aspect of Chaucer's engagement with earlier literature was his negotiation of the divide between pagan and Christian poetry. In this, Statius was particularly à propos, not merely as one of Chaucer's favorite classical authors, but also as a literary figure whose fictive biography, as noted above, straddled the pagan-Christian divide. In the wake of Boccaccio's ameliorative recasting in the *Teseida*, Chaucer's work effects a partial restoration of Statius' darker vision. Thus Chaucer was frequently mediating between Statius' *Thebaid* and Boccaccio's *Teseida* – and so engaging the latter both in its own right and as an intervening act of Statian reception. *The Knight's Tale*, dating to the 1380s or 1390s, well embodies this complex intertextual dynamic, in that it takes both the 12th book of the *Thebaid* and Boccaccio's *Teseida* as models, while articulating Chaucer's view of the Theban myth as embodying an intrinsically tragic element of human history (Philips 2010, 12 characterizes it as “a philosophical mediation on order and disorder, harmony and conflict”). In *The Knight's Tale* Statius serves as both model and literary authority: in addition to drawing on the *Thebaid* for both incidents and language, Chaucer twice cites it explicitly: first taking a pair of verses (*Theb.* 12.519–20) as the tale's opening epigram, and later recommending “Stace of Thebes” (I, 2294) for readers wishing further details on a particular element of his plot. Similarly, in the opening of *Anelida and Arcite*, he declares “First follow I Stace” (21), and after three stanzas of invocation he quotes the same two verses as in *The Knight's Tale*, along with their successor (*Theb.* 12.519–21), and opens his narrative with a translation of them.

In the wake of Boccaccio and Chaucer, medieval reception of the *Thebaid* reached a new level of indirection with John Lydgate's *The Siege of Thebes* (circa 1422). This is a comparatively short epic (4716 lines), written in heroic couplets, and treating events immediately preceding those narrated in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*. Indeed, Lydgate fashioned *The Siege of Thebes* as a kind of additional Canterbury Tale, even periodically signaling a narration delivered *en route*, as it were, to fellow pilgrims. Lydgate's engagement with Statius' *Thebaid* is mostly indirect, mediated via his main source, the Old French *Roman de Thèbes*, mentioned earlier, which he probably accessed through a prose redaction (Erdmann 1911, vi). Lydgate makes one explicit acknowledgment of “Stace of Thebes” (1272), as against recurring references to “myn autour,” signaling his version of the *Roman de Thèbes*. As Dewar (1991, xlv) observes, the tale of Thebes was by now so ensconced in the vernacular tradition that direct dependence upon Statius was entirely optional.

The *Thebaid* was also influential among poets writing on non-Theban themes. Boccaccio's older contemporary Petrarch (1304–1374) was a keen reader of Statius, and a great admirer of his work. His *Africa*, a poetic account of the Second Punic War, focusing

on the exploits of the Roman general Scipio, eventual conqueror of Carthage, was perhaps the last serious attempt to write a properly classical Latin epic. It was composed in the style and meter of imperial Roman epic, taking Virgil and Statius as preeminent models for narrative style, language, rhythm, and so on. (Petrarch appears to have composed his epic in total ignorance of Silius Italicus' *Punica*, which was rediscovered more than 40 years after his death: see Muecke 2010, 402). Statius' final lines in the *Thebaid* served as Petrarch's model of closure in the *Africa* (as they had for Joseph of Exeter in his *Bellum Troianum*; other writers would follow suit, including Boccaccio in the *Filocolo*).

With the waning of the Middle Ages, the prestige and influence of the *Thebaid* began to diminish, but this was a gradual process, and Statius' epic never suffered total eclipse. The decline can be attributed in part to a broad generic realignment in literary production that saw epic steadily lose ground to drama throughout Europe. With respect to Theban mythology, this was facilitated by the growing awareness of and access to other sources, above all Greek tragedy. More crucially, new intellectual climates and aesthetic movements proved to be less hospitable to the perceived stylistic excesses and conceptual and thematic discontinuities of the *Thebaid* – and indeed of post-Augustan epic more broadly.

The decline is somewhat more evident in Britain, where literary interest seems more sharply to have veered away from the tale of Thebes' feuding brothers. It is rather striking that the first complete English translation of Statius' *Thebaid*, by William Lewis, was not published until 1766 – nearly three centuries after the appearance of the *editio princeps* (Rome, 1470), and far later than was the case for Italian and French. Prior to this Thomas Stephens had produced a translation of the first five books in 1648; and Alexander Pope wrote a translation of the first book, which was published in 1712. With Latin gradually losing ground as a reading language, the absence of a complete English translation inevitably contributed to a receding readership. That said, Statius' epic continued to command the attention of major writers. It is perhaps unlikely that Shakespeare read Statius, but he was certainly well versed in the romance tradition the *Thebaid* had spawned, and Statian influence, whether direct or indirect, is evident in his work. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, for example, Shakespeare sets Theseus in a context of conflicting customs and fraternal strife that seems consciously reminiscent of Statius' *Thebaid* (Ross 2007, xxi).

And if the overall theme of the *Thebaid* garnered less interest, Statius' influence continued to register in works having nothing to do with the Theban myth. The sporadic influence of the *Thebaid* on Renaissance English literature is evident in the scattered reminiscences of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queen* (1590, 1596) and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667, revised 1674) and *Paradise Regained* (1671). Elsewhere, Ariosto's romantic epic *Orlando Furioso* (whose final version was issued in 1532) often engages closely with the *Thebaid* (so, for example, Ariosto took Statius' account of the death of Parthenopaeus at *Theb.* 9.570–907 as a model for the death of Dardinello in Cantos 18 and 19).

The critical reputation of the *Thebaid* follows a similar trajectory to its literary influence, with decline setting in after the Middle Ages. But again, that decline was a gradual one, and Statius long retained high critical esteem: Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484–1558), one of the most influential Italian scholars of the cinquecento, ranked Statius among the great poets of antiquity, second only to Virgil. From the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries the *Thebaid* was increasingly subjected to criticism, particularly for its apparent failure to adhere to properly “classical” – which is to say Virgilian – artistic standards. John Dryden (1631–700), in the dedication to his celebrated translation of

the *Aeneid*, characterized admiration for the *Thebaid* as a mark of an immature intellect unable “to discern the difference betwixt Fustian, or ostentatious Sentences, and the true Sublime.” Such enthusiasts, Dryden went on, would forsake this kind of poetry “as their Judgment ripens.” Early in his career Alexander Pope produced a translation to *Thebaid* 1; in the preface to a later edition of it the editor Joseph Wharton remarked “it was in his childhood only that [Pope] could make choice of so injudicious a writer as Statius to translate.” Pope himself was one of many who condemned Statius for failing to construct a sound plot. In his correspondence he remarked that “in the very beginning he [sc. Statius] unluckily betrays his ignorance in the rules of Poetry (which Horace had already taught the Romans) when he asks his Muse where to begin his *Thebaid* ...” (To H. Cromwell, *Letter* 5, June 22, 1708). Such critiques were perhaps inevitable from poets who would be styled “Augustan” for their adherence to a classical aesthetic that was decidedly pre-Flavian. The rejection of the “Silver” features of Statius’ epic also marked a new critical awareness of the stylistic gulf separating the *Thebaid* and other post-Augustan epics from Virgil’s *Aeneid*. The critical reputation of the *Thebaid* suffered further in the wake of nineteenth century Romanticism. The downward spiral finally halted at the end of the twentieth century, when the *Thebaid*, along with much other “Silver” Latin poetry, was subjected to a movement of critical re-evaluation that continues in the present day and has begun to restore the epic to a measure of its former luster.

2 Latin prose writers

An impulse of intellectual consolidation is characteristic of much of the prose literature of the Flavian Age. This is a period in which elite Roman authors amassed, evaluated and systematized bodies of knowledge, often those in their particular areas of specialization. An exemplary figure in this regard is Sextus Julius Frontinus, a prominent senator of the Flavian period, who served as governor of Britain from 75–78 (on his activity there see CHAPTER 14, FLAVIAN BRITAIN, sections 3–4), and campaigned with Domitian against the Chatti in 83. Frontinus, widely recognized among his contemporaries as a preeminent military strategist, wrote two treatises on military strategy, the *De re militari*, which has not survived, and the *Strategemata* (Stratagems), a collection of military stratagems from Greek and Roman history, composed between 84 and 88 CE and published in 90. After the death of Domitian, he was appointed by Nerva to the position of superintendent of aqueducts (*curator aquarum*) at Rome. Whence came his best-known work, the *De aquis urbis Romae*, a history and description of the Roman water supply. In much the same way Quintilian, the preeminent educator of his time, produced a comprehensive manual on education. If Quintilian’s tome seems daunting in its size, it pales in comparison to Pliny’s *Natural History*, which, comprising 37 books, is the largest Latin prose work to survive from antiquity. Pliny was perhaps the most prodigious compiler of information among all Roman writers (his indefatigable approach is described by his nephew at Plin. *Epist.* 3.5). His goal in writing the *Natural History* was to provide nothing less than a comprehensive inventory of human knowledge.

The impulse to systemize and preserve knowledge was broadly characteristic of the early imperial period, but is particularly pronounced in the Flavian Age. Quintilian

eloquently expresses the prevailing view that existing bodies of knowledge were not in need of significant expansion, as there was little of importance left to discover:

Quae tandem ars digna litteris Platoni defuit? Quot saeculis Aristoteles didicit ut non solum quae ad philosophos atque oratores pertinent scientia complecteretur, sed animalium satorumque naturas omnis perquireret? Illis haec invenienda fuerunt, nobis cognoscenda sunt. Tot nos praeceptoribus, tot exemplis instruxit antiquitas, ut possit videri nulla sorte nascendi aetas felicior quam nostra, cui docendae priores elaborarunt.

Quint. *Inst.* 12.11.22

In what field of knowledge pertinent to literary expression was Plato deficient? How many generations' study did Aristotle require to embrace not merely the whole range of philosophical and rhetorical knowledge, but to investigate the nature of every beast and plant? They had to discover all these things that we have merely to learn. Antiquity has given us all these teachers and all these patterns for our imitation, that there might be no greater happiness conceivable than to be born in this age above all others, since all previous ages have labored that we might reap the fruit of their wisdom.

What was required was thus to record established knowledge, thereby preserving it from loss. It was also important to evaluate the observations and analysis of one's predecessors (cf. Quint. *Inst.* 1. pr. 2), extracting what was of value and thereby systematizing the given field of knowledge for the common good. The result is a series of literary works that might be classified as "handbooks": texts that provide the reader with the best available information in a particular field of knowledge, while organizing that information in a convenient and accessible format – here we may think Pliny's innovative provision of a *summarium* to facilitate targeted consultation of his *Natural History*. One consequence of this is that Flavian prose writers produced a number of works that, thanks to their chronological range and universalist ambition, do not obviously reflect the Flavian period in which they were written. But this also ensured an extended "shelf life": a number of these handbooks continued to find avid readers for many centuries. Another consequence is that the texts produced were often comparatively "open" in format and so easily excerpted, emended or even revised by later authors. With respect to such "active" reception, an intriguing feature of Frontinus' *Strategemata* is the author's prefatory invitation to knowledgeable readers to supplement his list of examples:

Nam cum hoc opus, sicut cetera, usus potius aliorum quam meae commendationis causa aggressus sim, adiuvari me ab his, qui aliquid illi astruent, non argui credam.

Frontin. *Str.* 1. pr. 5

As I have undertaken this work, like my previous ones, for the benefit of others rather than for the sake of my own renown, I shall deem myself assisted, rather than criticized, by those who make additions to it.

While for a few experts and scholars volumes like the *Strategemata* might be objects for supplementation and emendation, and others like Pliny's *Natural History* might serve as models for the systematization of knowledge, for the vast bulk of readers the popularity of these texts went hand in hand with their immediate utility. They remained widely read until the information they contained was superseded – which often did not

occur until well into the modern period – at which point they were rendered obsolete and faded into obscurity. Their eclipse was often facilitated by the unvarnished character of their prose: unlike the works of more “lofty” genres, these handbook-like texts were generally written for content rather than style.

2.1 *Pliny the Elder*

In many ways, the most extraordinary and consequential literary work to survive from the Flavian period is Pliny the Elder’s *Naturalis Historia* (conventionally rendered *Natural History*, but “survey of nature” better conveys the sense). Despite an onerous public career, Pliny managed in his spare time to study a wide range of natural phenomena. The *Natural History*, the only extant work from Pliny’s prodigious literary output (see CHAPTER 26, LOST FLAVIAN LITERATURE, section 1), was the ultimate product of this activity. Pliny clearly understood the value of detailed firsthand observation – a fact that emerges from his nephew’s account of his activity during the eruption of Vesuvius (see CHAPTER 28, VESUVIUS AND POMPEII, section 1). But, given the demands of his professional life, it was perhaps inevitable that the *Natural History* mostly reports phenomena at secondhand. In the preface Pliny claims to have consulted all the relevant works of prior Greek and Roman writers. He states that he has reported 20 000 facts from 2000 works by more than 200 authors – truly prodigious totals in a world before the printing press – and that he had added additional facts based on his own observation. The *Natural History*, often referred to as an “encyclopedia” (on which more later in this section), is truly encyclopedic in scope, with dimensions to match: published in 37 books, it is the largest literary work to survive from the Roman Empire, and, as mentioned earlier, the largest extant Latin prose work from all of antiquity. Pliny’s colossal opus has rightly been identified as one of the most successful books in all of human history – and indeed one of the books that most powerfully influenced that history. It is the lone work from the Flavian Age included by Robert B. Downs in his well-known volume *Books that Changed the World*.

On the most fundamental level, the significance of the *Natural History* for later ages resides in the fact that it handed on to posterity a mass of information not available from any other source. Pliny’s massive compendium of the writings of Greek and Roman authorities in such fields as zoology, botany, mineralogy, cosmology, astronomy, geography, anthropology, and pharmacology constituted a major source for ancient views on these matters. For roughly 15 centuries, it also enjoyed preeminence in the West as the most authoritative compendium of scientific and other knowledge. It thus played a seminal role in the history of science. Even in the modern period, after Pliny had lost importance as a “scientific” authority, the French naturalist Georges Cuvier (1769–1832) characterized the *Natural History* as “one of the most precious monuments left to us by antiquity, and a proof of the astonishing learning of a warrior and a statesman.” His contemporary Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) remarked that Pliny’s opus surpasses in the richness of its contents all other literary works of antiquity.

Through the ages, different readers have approach Pliny’s rich and manifold text in different ways and on different levels of sophistication. In writing his *Origines*, an etymological dictionary, in the early seventh century, Isidore of Seville depended heavily on the *Natural History*, particularly in Books 12 (on animals), 13 (the physical world), and 14 (geography), treating Pliny as a fellow compiler of textual authorities. In writing

the *De Natura Rerum* (*On the Nature of Things*, a Christian variation on ancient cosmological writing, most notably Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*) at the beginning of the eighth century, the Venerable Bede drew heavily upon Pliny (as well as Isidore) as he expounded upon the natural world. Indeed, Pliny's definition of the world (NH 24.10–11) provides the plan for the *De Natura Rerum*. But less erudite, practical readers were no doubt always in the majority, and Pliny explicitly identified "humble folk" (*humili vulgo*, NH pr. 6) as his target audience. The immense popularity of the *Natural History* for the better part of two millennia can be attributed in no small part to Pliny's inclusion of "practical" information, such as simple remedies. The provision of such material constituted an important spur for the subsequent encyclopedic tradition. From antiquity to the Renaissance and beyond, the *Natural History* was continually mined for insights into or solutions for everyday problems. Some of this material falls into dubious (from a scientific perspective) realms, such as folk medicine or even "magic," but its importance for readers over the centuries should not be underestimated.

From the Flavian period onwards, manuscripts of the *Natural History* appear to have been produced at a prodigious rate; more than 200 are still in existence. Its daunting length notwithstanding, the perceived importance of Pliny's text evidently justified the production and transmission of complete copies. At the same time, practicality and convenience inevitably prompted the production of epitomes and the excerpting of particular subject matter, tendencies that were already conspicuous in late antiquity. The *Medicina Plinii*, a medical breviary compiled in the early fourth century, enjoyed great popularity in the Middle Ages, as did the *Physica Plinii*, compiled in the sixth century. Such excerpting was still being undertaken in the twelfth century, when Robert of Cricklade produced the *Defloratio*, in nine books, which he dedicated to Henry II. In modern times, Pliny's three books focusing on art have proven to be a favorite for excerpting and publishing in translation, a practice that enjoyed a particular vogue in eighteenth-century France (Tunstall 2006, 345), and saw a high-water mark with British art historian Eugénie Sellers' influential nineteenth-century compilation *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art*, but which continues to this day. Modern art critics were long influenced by Pliny's canons of perfection and the criteria he posited for them.

The close engagement of writers like Augustine and Isidore of Seville demonstrates that the *Natural History* already enjoyed a vigorous reception in late antiquity; but it was in the Middle Ages that Pliny first emerged as an intellectual colossus. Though not a curriculum author, he was widely read throughout the medieval period, and was regarded as an almost infallible authority on a wide range of subjects. His standing as the preeminent expositor on astronomical matters at the court of Charlemagne is attested in a letter of Alcuin's to his monarch, reverently referring to Pliny as *naturalium rerum devotissimus inventor Plinius Secundus* (MGH *Epistulae* vol. 4 p. 250).

The *Natural History* remained a text of unrivaled importance in the Renaissance. The *editio princeps* (first printed edition) appeared in Venice in 1469, making it, significantly, the first scientific work to be printed. The next hundred years would see the production of more than 50 full editions of the *Natural History*. Translations into modern languages began to appear in the same period, starting with Italian in 1501. Humanist scholars devoted great attention to the *Natural History*: commentaries were produced in considerable number, including those by Hermolaus Barbarus (1492), Gelenius (1554), Delecampius (1587), Salmasius (1629), and Harduinus (1685).

The importance of the *Natural History* for later ages resides not only in its preservation of information, but in its embodiment of a peculiar literary form. A crucial aspect of the reception of Pliny's text has to do with its influence as an encyclopedia, that is, as an organized compendium of information from one or more branches of knowledge. Its tremendous impact on subsequent periods is due in no small part to its use as font and model for the subsequent encyclopedia tradition. The *Natural History* constitutes one of the earliest attempts, and by far the most influential, to produce a structured "totality of knowledge." It is the earliest extant encyclopedia, and in the view of Doody (2010, 4), the first of its kind. Pliny himself declared that he was the first among Greeks and Romans to undertake such a massive compendium (*NH* pr. 14); he also employed the term "encyclopedia" (ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, meaning something like "general education," *NH* pr. 14), a usage thereby enshrined for subsequent ages. There can be no doubt that the phenomenal success of the *Natural History*, its immense popularity with readers in subsequent ages, consigned other ancient specimens of the genre to oblivion.

For the medieval period, Pliny embodied the Roman encyclopedia tradition. The *Natural History* enjoyed untrammelled authority and was the principal source for medieval encyclopedias and anthologies. The *Natural History* also provided the model upon which the "encyclopedic" tradition of the Renaissance humanists was subsequently modeled (Sloan 1990, 295).

Pliny and his encyclopedic successors faced two problems: to structure sequentially a vast body of knowledge in a logical manner, and to facilitate non-sequential reading. A systematic method of organizing material is essential to making any encyclopedia usable; here it should be borne in mind that the organizing principle most familiar to modern readers, the alphabetical method, only came into use in the modern era. Unlike most modern encyclopedias, the structure of Pliny's encyclopedia makes continuous reading a coherent experience. In the opening book he declares a macro-structure that divides the rest of the opus into two equal parts, the first (Books 2–19) dealing with nature in its own right, and the second (Books 20–37) with nature related to humans as healer and nurturer, with additional layers of subdivision. But, like later encyclopedias, the *Natural History* is a work intended for consultation rather than continuous reading, and to this end, Pliny provides in the opening book a lengthy *summarium*, something between a table of contents and an index, which makes the work navigable. As Blake (2008, 24) observes:

The *Natural History* is practical because accessible. Pliny's most important tool in the organization of his work for maximum utility is the *summarium*. This list of the subject headings of the work, and the authors from whom Pliny has excerpted his information, makes up the entire first volume in modern editions. Pliny [states] that the *summarium* is meant as a convenience for his readers (*NH* pr. 33); [it provides] a way to avoid time-consuming sequential reading of the text.

To make the work even more navigable, Joannes Camers published in 1514 a free-standing index for the *Natural History*, which referenced the line numbers of the codex printed in the Venice edition of 1497. Camers' index made Pliny's opus even more encyclopedia-like (in the modern sense), while incidentally attesting to the heavy use and high prestige of the *Natural History*.

Another important aspect of the reception of Pliny's *Natural History* has to do with its influence as a particular kind of encyclopedic literary form, namely the "natural history" (tantamount, as noted earlier in this chapter, to "survey of nature"). Natural history in the broadest sense reached its pre-modern zenith in the fourth century BCE with Aristotle, who scientifically analyzed and cataloged the diversity of the natural world (most notably in the *Historia Animalium*; cf. Quint. *Inst.* 12.11.22, quoted earlier). From late antiquity onwards, Pliny was regarded not only as the successor of Aristotle in natural history, but as the greatest authority in that field (Farber 2000, 15). In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Pliny and Aristotle were considered antiquity's great naturalists, and were studied side-by-side. Pliny would finally suffer demotion vis-à-vis Aristotle in the Enlightenment, when fundamental differences between the two clarified (not least that Aristotle made his own observations and drew his own conclusions, whereas Pliny in the main collected those of others).

As the earliest comprehensive natural history, Pliny's magnum opus played a seminal role in the history of science. The *Natural History* covered more subjects and fields than the genre of "natural history" would encompass in later periods, when it came to be defined as the study, principally through observation, of organisms and their environment. The Flavian encyclopedist's nephew Pliny the Younger would characterize the *Natural History* as being "as manifold as Nature itself" (*nec minus varium quam ipsa Natura*, *Epist.* 3.5.6) – though in truth this fails to capture the work's diversity. In addition to the natural world, Pliny regarded virtually anything found in the world as fair game for natural history. He included fields connected with nature (such as geography) as well as human activity and phenomena deriving from it (technology, medicine, art, commerce, and even superstition). The French naturalist Buffon (on whom more later in this section) remarked that "Pline semble avoir mesuré la nature et l'avoir trouvée trop petite" (Pliny seems to have taken the measure of nature, and found it too small).

In the Renaissance, natural history came into its own as a literary form, and most specimens from this period bore an unmistakable Plinian stamp. So for example, the Swiss naturalist Konrad Gessner (1516–1565), the Italian naturalist Ulisses Aldrovandi (1522–1605), and the French naturalists Guillaume Rondelet (1507–1556) and Pierre Belon (1517–1564) all produced natural histories in the Plinian mold. The close relationship maintained with Pliny is evident in their vigorous efforts to identify the plants, animals, and minerals mentioned in the *Natural History*, and their concern to correct the errors of Pliny in light of new information.

The eclipse of Pliny as a scientific authority was a slow and fitful process. It was, appropriately enough, Francis Bacon (1561–1626), widely regarded as the founder of the scientific method, who took the first important stride in "ousting Pliny from his place in the scientific pantheon" (Doody 2010, 31). Bacon blasted Pliny for his dependence on unconfirmed sources and his gullibility, which resulted in the inclusion of fabulous material that was, in his words, "notoriously untrue." This included reports of races of human beings with only one eye, or without a mouth, or even without a head, whose eyes were on their shoulders (*NH* 7.2). Bacon's scientific scorn did not, however, inhibit his admiration of Pliny's opus as a model for the collection and organization of a vast survey of nature. Indeed, Bacon wrote his own *Naturalis Historia* (1622), for which the inspiration and much of the content came, as the title might suggest, from Pliny (for example, Bacon's section on prognosis of the behavior of winds is practically excerpted from Pliny's eighteenth book).

Among the so-called *philosophes*, that is, the major writers associated with the Enlightenment in France, Denis Diderot (1713–1784) was a particularly important reader of Pliny. Like Bacon, Diderot admired Pliny's *Natural History* less as a compendium of scientific truths than as an exemplary attempt at comprehensive coverage of a large field of knowledge. Moreover, while recognizing Pliny's limitations as an original observer, he saw in the *Natural History* an overarching profundity residing in its conception of the unity of Nature and the interdependence of the sciences.

Diderot's admiration for Pliny was shared by his celebrated contemporary Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–1788), who took the Flavian writer as his principal model in composing his own *Histoire Naturelle, Générale et Particulière*, an immense work in 44 volumes, published over four decades. This was an enormously influential opus that investigated and expounded upon such matters as the differences and divisions between species and the immense age of the earth (both of which would play a crucial role in the development of evolutionary theory). But for all this, Buffon's work followed the overall design of Pliny's (while, of course, excluding some areas of coverage in keeping with the narrower modern conception of natural history). It is littered with quotations from the Flavian *Natural History*, and frequently sings its praises. Buffon shares with Pliny the desire to construct a total picture of nature. As Farber (2000, 17) observes:

Buffon's natural history ... supplied one of the central documents of the Enlightenment, a new worldview that came into prominence after 1750, first in France and then throughout Europe. The *philosophes* sought to replace a Christian worldview with a naturalist one based on human reason. In their attempt to break with the past, the philosophes employed diverse intellectual tools [including] the writings of secular, classical Greek and Roman authors [like Pliny].

But gradually Pliny lost ground before the advance of modern science, as Bacon's views took hold and the *Natural History* was assailed by a growing throng of detractors. Particularly influential were the scathing critiques of the French naturalist Georges Cuvier (1769–1832) and Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), the latter characterizing Pliny's opus as a disorderly accumulation of unreliable facts. Pliny's eclipse went hand in hand with the dissolution of natural philosophy into a variety of specialized 'hard sciences'. This transition is neatly encapsulated in the opening chapter of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), widely regarded as the first work of science fiction. In supplying the novel's autobiographical incipit and accounting for his Promethean impulses, Dr. Frankenstein relates his disenchantment with old disciplinary paradigms: "I became disgusted with the science of natural philosophy, although I still read Pliny and Buffon with delight."

After Pliny's expulsion from the scientific pantheon, the displacement of the *Natural History* by modern encyclopedias, and, in broader terms, the demise of the natural history tradition, Pliny's opus became, if not a forgotten text, something akin to a relic or curiosity, retaining only vestigial importance for the cultural information it preserved on the ancient world. At length it found other circles of reception, albeit more eccentric and literary ones. The *mirabilia* it reported stirred the imagination of Romantic writers, for example, and in the twentieth century Pliny's text has intrigued authors such as Luis Borges and Italo Calvino.

2.2 *Quintilian*

The celebrated orator and teacher Quintilian was born in the Spanish town of Calagurris (modern Calahorra, whose main square nowadays honors him with a statue), but from 68 onwards he lived in Rome, where he enjoyed an illustrious career as an orator and educator. This saw him hold, for two decades, as the inaugural appointee, the prestigious Chair of Latin Rhetoric established by Vespasian; he was also awarded the consular insignia, and, after retiring, was made tutor to Domitian's two nephews and designated heirs (for more on Quintilian's career, see CHAPTER 17, EDUCATION IN THE FLAVIAN AGE, section 1). It was during his retirement that he composed his greatest and only extant work, the *Institutio Oratoria* (*The Education of the Orator*), which was published around 95 CE. This imposing work, extending to 12 very substantial books, provides a careful and detailed synthesis of ancient theories of education. Quintilian's goal was to produce a comprehensive manual mapping out the proper training for the citizen-orator, starting in infancy. As Leddy (1953, 50) well observes, the *Institutio Oratoria* "may reasonably be represented as the first practical and complete treatment of the subject of education, for Quintilian ... unlike Cicero [who discussed oratorical training in *De Oratore* and other works], begins with early childhood." The *Institutio Oratoria* of necessity touches on education and educational theory, as well as rhetoric and rhetorical theory. Much of the work is devoted to the presentation, analysis, and critique of his predecessors, both Greek and Roman, based on his own understanding and experience. As with Frontinus and Pliny, then, Quintilian's magnum opus belongs to the movement of systematization and codification of knowledge characteristic of the early imperial period, and the Flavian Age in particular.

The *Institutio Oratoria* was a text of lasting significance in the West: it would for many centuries constitute a standard, almost inevitable point of reference on matters of education. Its lasting importance is attributable in large part to the remarkable resilience of classical modes of education (grounded in the study of grammar and rhetoric, and designed to produce eloquent public speakers) in later ages. That resilience ensured that Quintilian would continue to enjoy a central position in pedagogical theory and practice until well into the modern period. Quintilian followed Cicero in insisting that the properly educated orator needed to have a broad, general education. The term "liberal arts" (*artes liberales*, or "subjects befitting a free man") is Ciceronian; the liberal arts curriculum as elaborated by Quintilian was codified by Martianus Capella in the fifth century as the seven liberal arts (the Trivium of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, along with the Quadrivium of music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy), in which form it held sway in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and even persisted into the modern period.

Quintilian is also a significant figure in the history of literary criticism, and an important voice in contemporary and later debates on Latinity. He led a classicizing reaction against what he perceived as the degenerate style of his day, of which Seneca was the chief exemplar. Quintilian argued against Seneca's terse, epigrammatic style, advocating a return to the more fluid, periodic prose of Cicero. This, then, is another aspect of Quintilian's intellectual legacy – his advocacy of style and production of literary canons (the latter in Book 10). In this sense, and independently of his educational theory, Quintilian had a profound impact on the reception of other writers. So, for example, he is largely responsible for Seneca's sullied reputation in later antiquity; likewise the ambivalent reputation of Seneca's nephew Lucan springs from Quintilian's oft-quoted epigrammatic evaluation (*Inst.* 10.1.90).

Quintilian was a figure of no small celebrity in his own time, as the opening apostrophe of one of Martial's epigrams attests:

Quintiliane, vagae moderator summe iuventae,
gloria Romanae, Quintiliane, togae ...
Mart. *Ep.* 2.90.1–2

Quintilian, peerless governor of straying youth, you are an honor, Quintilian, to the Roman toga.

Though this lofty incipit is something of a set-up – Martial goes on to mock the orator's drive for wealth and status, characterizing him as “a man who longs to surpass his father's census rating” (*patrios optat qui vincere census*, *Ep.* 2.90.6) – it nonetheless attests to Quintilian's contemporary renown as an educator. After his death Quintilian appears occasionally in the *Satires* of Juvenal, who may have been one of his students (Gwynn 1926, 139). For Juvenal, Quintilian is both a byword for deft forensic speech (*Sat.* 6.279–1), and an unusual case of material success in the normally impoverished teaching profession (*Sat.* 7.186–9).

The references in Martial and Juvenal suggest that Quintilian enjoyed considerable celebrity in his own day. In the next two centuries, however, he may have suffered some academic opposition and a corresponding decline in popularity (Wheelock 1974, 17–8). If so, then something of a revival seems to have taken place in the fourth century, when the Roman rhetorician Julius Victor composed an *Ars Rhetorica* that is heavily based on the *Institutio Oratoria*. It is likewise in the fourth and fifth centuries that the long-standing Christian hostility to pagan education began to be tempered through the influence of figures like Jerome and Augustine, in whose work the influence of Quintilian is manifest. Indeed, the educational theories of Jerome (circa 347–circa 420) owe a considerable debt to Quintilian, who was evidently among his favorite pagan authors. Augustine (354–430), a central figure in the Christian appropriation of the Liberal Arts, drew heavily upon Quintilian, both in general and in particular. The fourth book of his *On Christian Learning* (426) was principally concerned with the role of rhetoric, and manifests a broad debt to Quintilian, as well as close dependence in specific discussions.

The encyclopedists Cassiodorus (480–575) and Isidore of Seville (570–636) were, like Augustine, drawn to Quintilian's ideal of universal knowledge, and made substantial use of the *Institutio Oratoria* (Wheelock 1974, 18). Their authority eventually helped to cement Quintilian's position as a rhetorician (Colson 1924, xlvi). In their wake, though, a number of centuries pass in which Quintilian's reception appears to have been minimal.

The Middle Ages yield only limited indications of knowledge and use of the *Institutio Oratoria*. Quintilian was not a curriculum author; moreover, his opus had been so frequently abbreviated that full texts were either unavailable or extremely hard to come by: certainly by the end of the medieval period, and continuing into the early Renaissance, there were no complete manuscripts in circulation. Scattered testimonia attest to knowledge of Quintilian in the twelfth century; in the following century the encyclopedist Vincent de Beauvais demonstrates extensive familiarity with the *Institutio Oratoria* in his own great compendium, the *Speculum Maius* (Colson 1924, li).

A dramatic upsurge of interest in Quintilian took hold in the early Renaissance, notwithstanding the lack of a full text of the *Institutio Oratoria*. This new interest was

spearheaded by the Italian humanists and went hand in hand with the broader revival of Latin studies in Italy. The enthusiasm of Petrarch (1304–74) played an important role in Quintilian’s rising popularity. Petrarch famously wrote epistles to the ancient writers he most admired: Quintilian was the only Flavian author so honored (along with Homer, Cicero, Livy, Horace, Virgil, and Seneca). Petrarch laments the incomplete condition of the text, adding hopefully: “Yet perhaps your (full) work still exists somewhere, unknown even to those who hold it.” This would turn out to be the case: a full manuscript was eventually discovered, albeit not in Petrarch’s lifetime. Petrarch praised Quintilian as a kind of successor to Cicero, importantly credited with “completing” the latter’s work:

In these books [sc. of the *Institutio Oratoria*], whose total number I know not, but they must have been many, you dared to probe again a subject that Cicero himself had treated with consummate skill ... You have accomplished the impossible: you followed in the footsteps of so great a man and yet you won new glory ... By Cicero the orator was prepared for battle; by you he was formed and molded.

Petrarch, *Epistolae Familiares* 24.7

The vexing incompleteness of the *Institutio Oratoria* drove Gasparino de Barzizza, the leading fourteenth-century expert on Quintilian, to the expedient of creating a complete version by composing the missing portions, as he imagined them, himself. A more satisfactory resolution came with Poggio Bracciolini’s discovery of a manuscript of the full text in a monastery in St Gall, Switzerland in 1416. (Poggio’s visit to this monastery unearthed other manuscripts as well, including one containing a considerable portion of Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*, 1.1–4.317; a manuscript of the entire poem as far as extant, that is, 1.1–8.467 would be discovered a dozen or so years later by Niccoli). The recovery of the full 12 books of the *Institutio Oratoria* created a sensation, establishing Quintilian as the pedagogical touchstone of the age and a powerful influence on humanistic educators and teachers of rhetoric, including Vittorino da Feltre, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, Guarino da Verona, Lorenzo Valla, Pomponius Laetus, and Erasmus. Poggio’s discovery had come at a propitious moment. As Colson (1924, lxv), observes, “humanism, entering on a great and new heritage of knowledge, was ripe for a new, or what seemed like a new, philosophy of education.” Quintilian’s influence on educational theory and practice was enormous, and his emphasis on morality in connection with education and rhetoric resonated well with contemporary sentiment (Wheelock 1974, 18).

Quintilian also came into his own as a Latin stylist: the *Institutio Oratoria* was no less appreciated by the Italian humanists as providing standards for writing proper Latin. Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457), who claimed to know Quintilian almost by heart (*Quintilianum, quem prope ad verbum teneo*, Ed. 1543 p. 477), ranked him above Cicero – notwithstanding that Quintilian himself had made Cicero his own unsurpassable ideal. Quintilian was now generally ranked second or third among Latin authors, a position he would retain until the seventeenth century (Leddy 1953, 47).

The *editio princeps* (first printed edition) of the *Institutio Oratoria* appeared in Rome in 1470. The following decades saw dozens more editions produced in rapid succession. The enthusiasm for Quintilian spread with humanism itself, reaching northern Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Quintilian’s influence remained strong during

the Reformation (sixteenth century). He was one of the favorite authors of the ecclesiastical reformer Martin Luther, who declared that he preferred Quintilian to almost all authors, “because he educates and at the same time demonstrates eloquence.”

After reaching his zenith in the Renaissance, Quintilian’s influence began to decline, but this was a slow process and he long retained his status as a major author. In the seventeenth century he features prominently in Ben Jonson’s *Discoveries* (1641). He also receives honorable mention from Alexander Pope (1688–1744) in his versified *Essay on Criticism*:

In grave Quintilian’s copious works we find
The justest rules and clearest method join’d
Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 669–70

Quintilian is often mentioned by writers like Montaigne and Lessing, and he still provided a pertinent educational model as late as the eighteenth century (Conte 1987, 517). But as education started to change in the West – fueled by the decline of public oratory and Romanticism’s new ideas about the nature of children and the proper way to educate them – the *Institutio Oratoria* lost relevance and ceased to be regarded as a viable educational handbook (Conte 1987, 518). By the nineteenth century its readership had dwindled and it was rarely edited; nowadays it is little read outside the circle of professional scholars.

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FURTHER READING

A brief but often incisive account of the reception of the authors discussed in this chapter can be found at the end of individual entries, under the heading “Literary Success,” in Conte (1987). For the reception of Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica*, not specifically addressed in this chapter, Zissos (2006) remains the only comprehensive survey. For Statius’ contemporary response to the *Argonautica* in the *Thebaid*, see Stover (2009) and Parkes (2014). For Martial’s reception of Valerius, see Zissos (2004). On the “conclusion” to Valerius’ incomplete epic, written in Latin hexameters by the enterprising poet-scholar Giovanni Battista Pio in the early sixteenth century, see Zissos (2014).

For the reception of Silius Italicus’ *Punica*, also not specifically addressed in this chapter, a general survey is wanting, but a number of more narrowly focused studies are available. Schieffer (1975) demonstrates that the *Punica* was evidently known to the author of the *Waltharius*, a Latin epic poem of the ninth or tenth century, relating the legendary exploits of the Germanic hero Walter of Aquitaine. Bassett (1953) looks at a number of English writers of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries whose work has been influenced by (or demonstrates familiarity with) Silius’ epic. The political background and ideological underpinnings of Thomas Ross’ translation of the *Punica* (1661), the first in English, to which the translator added a *Continuation from the Triumph of Scipio to the Death of Hannibal*, is perceptively investigated by von Contzen (2013).

For Martial’s influence, Sullivan (1993) is an especially helpful and thorough survey.

Dewar (1991, xxxvii–xlvi) remains among the best overall surveys of the reception of Statius’ poetry. Battles (2004) offers a detailed and rigorous analysis of the medieval literary tradition engendered by Statius’ *Thebaid*.

Frontinus’ *Strategemata*, which is not specifically addressed in this chapter, is unduly dismissed by Conte (1987, 503) as little more than a collection of military anecdotes; Wheeler (1988, 1–21) shows that is a rather more purposeful work that ranks among the most influential military treatises in the West until the nineteenth century. Wood (1967) demonstrates that Frontinus’ *Strategemata* exerted a powerful influence on Machiavelli – not only his *Arte della Guerra*, but other works as well. La Charité (2012) offers a useful discussion of Frontinus’ influence, and argues that Rabelais’ lost Latin treatise *Strategemata* was, at least in part, a commentary on its Flavian namesake.

Doody (2010) provides a thought-provoking and accessible study of the reception of Pliny’s opus, discussing its conception as a proto-encyclopedia as well other strategies employed in the complex history of reading the *Natural History*.

For the reception of Quintilian, one of the best and most comprehensive treatments remains the pertinent introductory sections of Colson’s commentary on the first book of the *Institutio Oratoria* (1924, XLIII–XC).

APPENDIX 1

Chronology

Vesp. = Vespasian; *Dom.* = Domitian; *Pub.* = publication of; *Dedic.* = dedication of. Events preceded by an asterisk (*) are conjecturally assigned to the indicated year.

CE	Political Events	Architecture/ Literature/Culture
9	Birth of Vesp. in Falacrinae (Nov. 17)	
39	*Birth of Titus in Rome (Dec. 30)	
40	*Vesp. praetor	
43–	Claudius' invasion of Britain	
47	[Vesp. subdues SW, captures Isle of Wight]	
51	Birth of Dom. in Rome (Oct. 24) Vesp. suffect consul (Nov. – Dec.)	
62	Earthquake at Pompeii and environs *Vesp. proconsul of Africa (62–63)	
63	*Titus marries Arrecina Turtulla (his first wife)	
64	Daughter Julia born to Titus and Arrecina [Arrecina perhaps died giving birth]	
66	Revolt breaks out in Judea (May) C. Cestius Gallus botches attack on Jerusalem, losing 6000 soldiers (Nov.) Vesp. given command of Judean campaign (Dec.)	
67	Arrival of Vesp. and Titus in Palestine Vesp. subdues Galilee [Josephus, taken prisoner, prophesies Vesp.'s destiny] *Titus meets Berenice	

CE	Political Events	Architecture/ Literature/Culture
68	Vesp. reduces Judea, Idumaea, Peraea Revolt of Vindex and Galba (March) Senate recognizes Galba as emperor (Jun. 8) Suicide of Nero (Jun. 9) Galba enters Rome (Sep.-Oct.)	
69	<i>Year of Four Emperors</i> Vitellius proclaimed emperor by troops (Jan. 2) Galba adopts Piso (Jan. 10) Murder of Galba and Piso; Otho proclaimed emperor (Jan. 15) Vitellians defeat Othonians at Bedriacum (Apr. 14) Otho commits suicide (Apr. 16) Senate recognizes Vitellius as emperor (Apr. 19) Conference at Mt. Carmel (Jun.) Troops in Egypt hail Vesp. emperor (Jul. 1) Troops in Syria, Judea take oath to Vesp. (Jul. 2-14) Conference at Berytus (later Jul.) Antonius Primus invades Italy Flavians defeat Vitellians at Cremona (Oct. 24-25) Vesp. in Alexandria (Nov.); Titus left in command of Judean campaign Flavian supporters besieged in Rome: Flavius Sabinus slain, Dom. escapes (Dec. 19) Flavian forces take Rome; Vitellius slain (Dec. 20) Senate recognizes Vesp. as emperor (Dec. 21) <i>*Lex de imperio Vespasiani</i> passed Sarmatians and Dacians raid across the Danube Julius Civilis leads Batavian Revolt in Gaul	
70	Siege of Jerusalem begins (spring) Titus captures and sacks Jerusalem; destruction of Temple (Aug.) Vesp. named <i>Pontifex Maximus</i> and <i>Pater Patriae</i> (before Oct.) Vesp. arrives in Rome (Oct.) Petillius Cerealis defeats Civilis, ending revolt in Gaul (autumn) Domitian marries Domitia Longina	Inaugural ceremony for rebuilding Temple of Capitoline Jupiter (Jun. 21)
71	Titus meets Parthian envoys Titus returns to Rome (Jun.) Triumph of Vesp. and Titus (Jun.) Titus made Praetorian Prefect; given tribunician, proconsular power (Jul. 1) Closing of the Gates of the Temple of Janus Expulsion of philosophers from Rome	Construction of <i>Templum Pacis</i> and Flavian Amphitheater begins

(Continued)

(Continued)

CE	Political Events	Architecture/ Literature/Culture
72	Annexation of Commagene *Fall of Machaerus, Herodium (Judean holdouts)	*Vesp. creates professorial chairs of rhetoric in Greek and Latin [Quintilian appointed to latter]
73	Joint censorship of Vesp. & Titus (Apr. 73–Oct. 74) Census conducted Expansion of senate (esp. provincial <i>novi homines</i>) *Fall of Masada (last Judean holdout); mass suicide Sardinia with Corsica transferred to the emperor	
74	Grant of <i>Ius Latii</i> throughout Hispania Pamphylia and Lycia made a province Petillius Cerealis completes subjugation of Brigantes (Britain, 71–74) *Execution of Helvidius Priscus	
75	Extension of <i>pomerium</i> Death of Antonia Caenis Arrival of Berenice (and her brother Agrippa) in Rome Vesp. declines to help Parthians against Alans *Annexation of <i>Agri Decumates</i> completed	Dedic. <i>Templum Pacis</i>
76	Parthians invade Syria	*Pub. Maternus Curiatus' <i>Thyestes</i>
77	Modest victories over Parthia Outbreak of Plague in Rome Agricola appointed governor of Britain *Death of Mucianus (<i>terminus ante quem</i>)	Pub. Pliny the Elder's <i>Natural History</i>
78	Titus censor Roman campaign against the Bructeri	
79	Deaths of conspirators Epirus Marcellus and Alienus Caecina Death of Vesp. (June 23) Accession of Titus (June 24) *Berenice leaves Rome Eruption of Vesuvius, destroying Pompeii and Herculaneum (Aug. 24) [Death of Pliny the Elder] * <i>Consecratio</i> of Vesp.	Pub. Josephus' <i>Jewish War</i> (Greek version)
80	Great Fire in Rome [Destruction of Temple of Capitoline Jupiter] Epidemic in Rome	Dedic. Flavian Amphitheater; inaugural games for 100 days (Apr. –Jul.) Dedic. Baths of Titus *Pub. Martial's <i>Liber Spectaculorum</i>

CE	Political Events	Architecture/ Literature/Culture
81	Death of Titus (Sep. 13) Accession of Domitian (Sep. 14) <i>Consecratio</i> of Titus	
82	Dom. marries Domitia (who is made Augusta) Disgrace of Flavius Sabinus Dedication of restored Temple of Capitoline Jupiter Incursions of Chatti	Dio Chrysostom banished from Italy and Prusa *Dedic. Arch of Titus
83	Dom. campaigns against Chatti (spring) [takes <i>cognomen</i> 'Germanicus' (autumn)] *Dom. divorces, exiles Domitia *Defeat of Calgacus at Mons Graupius by Agricola *Execution of three Vestals for unchastity	
84	Triumph for victory over Chatti Dom. takes title <i>Germanicus</i> *September renamed <i>Germanicus</i> , October <i>Domitianus</i> *Military pay raised by one-third *Agricola recalled from Britain	*Pub. Martial's <i>Epigrams</i> begins (continuing through 102)
85	Dom. becomes <i>ensor perpetuus</i> (Apr.) First Danubian campaign Extension of frontier on upper Rhine and Maine Invasion of Moesia by Dacians under Decebalus	Pub. Statius' <i>De Bello Germanico</i>
86	Second Danubian campaign *Triumph for victory over Dacians Defeat of Cornelius Fuscus in Dacia by Decebalus, resulting in annihilation of <i>legio v Alaudae</i> (summer) Revolt of Nasamones in Africa	Dedic. Stadium of Domitian Inaugural <i>Ludi Capitolini</i> (Capitoline Games) Jun. 6–12
87	Unsuccessful plot against Domitian *Roman withdrawal from northern conquests in Britain	*Dedic. Templum Vespasiani et Titi
88	Revolt of Saturninus, governor of Germania Superior, joined by Chatti Defeat of Roman forces in Pannonia by Quadi and Marcomanni Invasion of Dacia by forces under Julianus, defeating Decebalus at Tapae	<i>Ludi Saeculares</i> (Secular Games) late May–early June Quintilian retires; begins composing <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
89	Peace treaty with Decebalus (compelled by rebellions in Lower Germany, Pannonia) Revolt of Saturninus put down Dom. campaigns against Marcomanni, Suevi and Iazyges Double triumph for victories over Dacians, Chatti (Nov./Dec.) *Death of Titus' daughter Julia *Cornelia, senior Vestal, executed for unchaste conduct	

(Continued)

(Continued)

CE	Political Events	Architecture/ Literature/Culture
90	*Expulsion of philosophers from Rome	Statius' victory (for poetry) at Alban Games
91	Iazyges cross Danube (spring) Agricola declines proconsular province	Dedic. Equestrian statue of Dom. *Pub. Statius' <i>Thebaid</i>
92	Dom.'s vine edict (restricting viticulture in provinces) War against Sarmatae and Suevi	Completion of <i>Domus Flavia</i> *Pub. Statius' <i>Silvae</i> begins (continuing through 96)
93	Death of Agricola (Aug. 23) Arulenus Rusticus, Herennius Senecio and Helvidius Priscus the Younger sentenced to death [all for 'subversive' writings] *Dom. adopts his two great nephews	
94	*Expulsion of philosophers from Rome and Italy [Dio Chrysostom and Epictetus affected]	*Death of Valerius Flaccus *Pub. Josephus' <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
95	Conspiracy against Domitian discovered Execution of Flavius Clemens	*Pub. Quintilian's <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
96	Dom. assassinated; <i>damnatio memoriae</i> declared Nerva emperor (Sep. 18)	*Death of Statius
97	Nerva adopts Trajan (Oct.)	Dedic. of Forum Transitorium
98	Death of Nerva (Jan. 27) Accession of Trajan (Jan. 28)	Pub. Tacitus' <i>Agricola, Germania</i>
99		*Martial returns to Babilis
100	*Death of Josephus	*Death of Silius Italicus; Pub. Pliny the Younger's <i>Panegyricus</i>
101		*Pub. Tacitus' <i>Dialogus de Oratoribus</i>
104		Death of Martial
107		Pub. Pliny the Younger's <i>Letters</i> begins (continuing through 112)
109		Pub. Tacitus' <i>Histories</i>
112		*Pub. Juvenal's <i>Satires</i> begins

APPENDIX 2

Demographic and Other Estimates

Introduction

The intention here is to provide some broad estimates of population, economy, and military manpower for the Roman empire in the Flavian period. For these categories, particularly those pertaining to demographics, there is very little firm data. Evidence comes from various sources, including census reports, literary accounts, epitaphs and skeletal remains. But all these sources have their problems and, as Frier (2000, 787) has put it, “the underlying demographic structure of the early Roman empire is only dimly perceptible.” Moreover, these kinds of figures, to the extent they can be plausibly estimated, tend to refer to the early imperial period *in general*; there is little of specific relevance to the Flavian Age. It nonetheless seems useful to provide scholarly “best guesses.” all selected by Alessandro Launaro, to offer some sense of the state of affairs for the period that is the subject of this volume.

The Roman empire

Total population: 60–100 million (Wilson 2011, 192–3).

Of that number perhaps 22 million were Roman citizens (based on Claudius’ census of just less than 6 million *civium capita* in 47 CE, as reported at Tac. *Ann.* 11.25). Urban residents made up about 12% of the empire’s total population. The servile population of the empire as a whole was perhaps 5–10%. The slave supply was subject to abrupt influxes – mainly through military conquest, though this had become somewhat less common in the relatively stable conditions of the early imperial period. One such influx, of Judean slaves, occurred in the early Flavian period (Joseph. *BJ* 3.540–1, 7.118).

Italy

Total population: 8–18 million.

Of that number, perhaps 10% were slaves; around 10–20% were urban residents (these figures are projections based on Lo Cascio and Malanima 2005, 203–4; de Ligt 2012, 190 table 4.3; Hin 2013: 293–4 table 7.3). Italy certainly had a great many urban centers: Pliny the Elder mentions more than 400 in the *Natural History*, but most of these were towns with populations numbering in the thousands.

Rome and Other Major Cities

Population of Rome: 1 million (Morley 1996, 182 table 1).

The next largest cities in the Roman empire were Alexandria: 500 000; Carthage: 300 000; Antioch: 250 000 (Wilson 2011, 186 table 7.10, 184 table 7.8; 190 table 7.14 respectively; cf. Frier 2000, 813).

Rome was by far the largest city of the empire; it was also a true cosmopolis, with a large resident alien population. In the early imperial period there were few barriers to the movement of populations within the empire, and the testimony of both literature (Martial's *Epigrams* and Juvenal's *Satires*) and inscriptions indicate that large numbers of people took advantage of this fact, particularly in moving to Rome. There had been a significant Jewish community in Rome since the late Republic. Juvenal speaks metonymically of the Syrian Orontes polluting the Tiber (*Sat.* 3.60–65). Many Easterners will have also come to Rome as slaves. This was a group that enjoyed comparatively high rates of manumission, helping to produce a large freedman (and to a lesser extent freedwoman) population in Rome. Brunt (1966, 16) suggests that Easterners may have accounted for a majority of the freedmen in Rome.

Life expectancy

Average life expectancy at birth: 20–30 years (Scheidel 2007, 39).

The low overall life expectancy is skewed by a high rate of infant mortality, with about half of all children dying before reaching 10 years of age. The exposure of unwanted babies (especially girls) will have played a role as well, though how widespread this practice was remains uncertain. At any rate, those who reached the age of 20 seem to have had a life expectancy of around 55 years. There was, no doubt, considerable variation according to socio-economic status. The wealthy enjoyed advantages of diet, sanitation, medical attention and so on that will have contributed to a longevity surpassing that of other groups. Tacitus says of his father-in-law Agricola, who died in 93 CE at the age of 53, that “he was snatched away in middle age” (*medio in spatio integrae aetatis ereptus*, *Agr.* 44). This is hardly representative of the population as a whole, in which the elderly constituted a small minority. Helpful evidence is provided by analysis of the 150 skeletons buried at Herculaneum when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 (though this was a comparatively affluent population). A rough breakdown by age group has been estimated as follows: 0–14 years: 33%; 15–59 years: 61 %; 60 and over: 6% (Bissel apud Frier 2000, 790).

Economy

Average annual budget of the Roman state: 900 million *sestertii* (Duncan-Jones 1994, 33–46).

About 70–80% of the budget was spent on the army (see CHAPTER 10 THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FLAVIAN RULE, section 2). Annual pay for a legionary in the early Flavian period was 900 *sestertii*; Domitian increased it to 1200 *sestertii* (probably in 84 or 85).

Roman army

Size of the Roman army: 500 000 soldiers (Hassall 2000, 320–1).

Of this number about 160 000 were legionaries. The forces were mostly posted on frontiers in the Flavian period; there was no significant presence in cities or indeed in the core of the empire. The composition of the army was gradually changing: legionary recruitment from Italy declined steadily through the early imperial period, so that by the close of the Flavian Age Italians made up a mere 30% of Roman legionaries (Rosenstein 2007, 87); the proportion of Italians would continue to decrease thereafter.

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APPENDIX 3

Flavian Legionary Dispositions

Table 1 After Vespasian's reorganization (circa 71 CE): total 30 legions

Britain	II Augusta; IX Hispana; XX Valeria Victrix; II Adiutrix	4
Spain	VII Gemina	1
Germania Superior	I Adiutrix; VIII Augusta; XI Claudia Pia Fidelis; XIV Gemina	4
Germania Inferior	II Adiutrix; VI Victrix; X Gemina; XXI Rapax	4
Pannonia	XIII Gemina; XV Apollinaris; XXII Primigenia	3
Moesia	I Italica; IV Flavia Felix; V Alaudae; V Macedonica; VII Claudia Pia Fidelis	5
Syria	III Gallica; IV Scythica; VI Ferrata	3
Judea	X Fretensis	1
Cappadocia	XII Fulminata; XVI Flavia Firma	2
Egypt	III Cyrenaica; XXII Deiotariana	2
Africa	III Augusta	1

Table 2 Later in Vespasian's reign (circa 75 CE): total 29 legions

Britain	II Augusta; IX Hispana; XX Valeria Victrix; II Adiutrix	4
Spain	VII Gemina	1
Germania Superior	I Adiutrix; VIII Augusta; XI Claudia Pia Fidelis; XIV Gemina	4
Germania Inferior	VI Victrix; X Gemina; XXI Rapax; XXII Primigenia	4
Dalmatia	IV Flavia Felix	1
Pannonia	XIII Gemina; XV Apollinaris	2
Moesia	I Italica; V Alaudae; V Macedonica; VII Claudia Pia Fidelis	4
Syria	III Gallica; IV Scythica; VI Ferrata	3
Judea	X Fretensis	1
Cappadocia	XII Fulminata; XVI Flavia Firma	2
Egypt	III Cyrenaica; XXII Deiotariana	2
Africa	III Augusta	1

Table 3 Domitian's reign (circa 89 CE): total 29 legions

Britain	II Augusta; IX Hispana; XX Valeria Victrix	3
Spain	VII Gemina	1
Germania Superior	VIII Augusta; XI Claudia Pia Fidelis; XIV Gemina	3
Germania Inferior	I Minervia; VI Victrix; X Gemina; XXII Primigenia	4
Pannonia	I Adiutrix; XIII Gemina; XV Apollinaris; XXI Rapax	4
Moesia Superior	II Adiutrix; IV Flavia Felix; VII Claudia Pia Fidelis	3
Moesia Inferior	I Italica; V Macedonica	2
Syria	III Gallica; IV Scythica; VI Ferrata	3
Judea	X Fretensis	1
Cappadocia	XII Fulminata; XVI Flavia Firma	2
Egypt	III Cyrenaica; XXII Deiotariana	2
Africa	III Augusta	1

Note: I *Minervia* was created by Domitian in 82; V *Alaudae* was annihilated in 86.

APPENDIX 4

Lex de Imperio Vespasiani

1 Introduction

The partially surviving inscription (*CIL* 6.930 and 31207 = *ILS* 244 = *FIRA* 1.15 = MW 1) of the so-called *Lex de imperio Vespasiani* (law bestowing power on the emperor Vespasian) is preserved on a single bronze tablet, discovered prior to the fourteenth century (though perhaps as late as the pontificate of Boniface VIII at the end of the thirteenth), and now housed in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. What we have is the concluding tablet, as the closing *sanctio* (sanction, or, exemption from penalty) makes clear. How many tablets originally held the entire inscription is uncertain, but two is a plausible supposition. The *Lex*, which probably dates to early 70 CE, confers a range of powers on the emperor Vespasian. The extant clauses (the numbering is a modern convenience) are provided first in English translation with brief explanatory notes, followed by the original Latin text.

2 Translation

I. ...* that it be lawful for him [sc. Vespasian] to make treaties with whoever he wishes, just as it was lawful for the deified Augustus, for Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus [= the emperor Tiberius], and for Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus [= the emperor Claudius];

* A preceding clause such as “it pleased the senate ...” can be supplied from the preceding tablet, now lost.

II. And that it be lawful for him to convoke the senate (*senatum habere*) [sc. in order to put a matter before it], to submit motions to it (*relationem facere*)* and to withdraw them (*remittere*) [sc. when they are under consideration], to advance decrees of the senate (*senatus consulta*), by motion and division (*per relationem discessionemque*)** , just as it was lawful for the deified Augustus, for Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus [= the emperor Tiberius], for Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus [= the emperor Claudius];

* A *relatio* was a written motion: the right to submit these was a great convenience, especially when the emperor was away from Rome; it was also vital when the senate was meeting under the presidency of another magistrate.

** I.e. the emperor had the power to call a vote on his decree by division of the house (*per discessionem*); this could be done without allowing discussion.

III. And that, when the senate is convened in accordance with his will or authority, his order or mandate, or in his presence, the legality of all matters [carried out in that meeting] shall be maintained and preserved just as if the meeting of the senate had been convened and held by law;

IV. And that those seeking a magistracy (*magistratum*), a public office (*potestatem*), or the management of anything, whom he commends to the senate and people of Rome and those to whom he has given or promised his support (*suffragationem*), be given special consideration in every election;

V. And that it be lawful for him to advance and to extend the boundaries of the *pomerium* whenever he considers it to be in accordance with the public interest, just as it was lawful for Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus [= the emperor Claudius];

VI. And that whatever he considers to be in accordance with the public advantage and the dignity of divine, human, public and private matters, he shall have the right and the power to do (*agere facere*), just as had the deified Augustus and Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus [= the emperor Tiberius] and Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus [= the emperor Claudius];

VII. And that by whatever laws or plebiscites it has been recorded that the deified Augustus or Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus [= the emperor Tiberius] and Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus [= the emperor Claudius] were not bound, from these laws and plebiscites the emperor Caesar Vespasianus [= Vespasian] shall also be exempt; and whatsoever things it was proper for the deified Augustus or Tiberius Julius Caesar Augustus [= the emperor Tiberius] or Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus [= the emperor Claudius] to do in accordance with any law or proposed law, it shall be lawful for the emperor Caesar Vespasianus Augustus [= Vespasian] to do all these things;

VIII. And that whatever prior to the passage of this law has been done, carried out, decreed, or ordered by the emperor Caesar Vespasianus Augustus [= Vespasian] or by anyone at his order or mandate, these things shall be legal and binding, just as if they had been done by the order of the people or of the plebs.

Sanction. If as a consequence of this law anyone has or shall have done anything contrary to statutes or bills or plebiscites or decrees of the senate, or if as a consequence of this law he does not do what he ought to do in accordance with a statute or bill or plebiscite or decree of the senate, this shall not make him liable to punishment nor shall he be liable to pay the people anything on this account, nor shall anyone have the right to an action or a judgment concerning this matter, nor shall any official allow an action concerning this matter to be brought before him.

3 Latin text

[I] ... foedusve cum quibus volet facere liceat ita, uti licuit divo Aug(usto), Ti. Iulio Caesari Aug(usto), Tiberioque Claudio Caesari Aug(usto) Germanico;

[II] utique ei senatum habere, relationem facere, remittere, senatus consulta per relationem discessionemque facere liceat ita, uti licuit divo Aug(usto), Ti. Iulio Caesari Aug(usto), Ti. Claudio Caesari Augusto Germanico;

[III] utique cum ex voluntate auctoritateve iussu mandatuve eius praesenteve eo senatus habebitur, omnium rerum ius perinde habeatur servetur, ac si e lege senatus edictus esset habereturque;

[IV] utique quos magistratum potestatem imperium curationemve cuius rei petentes senatui populoque Romano commendaverit quibusque suffragationem suam dederit promiserit, eorum comitis quibusque extra ordinem ratio habeatur;

[V] utique ei fines pomerii proferre promovere, cum ex re publica censebit esse, liceat ita, uti licuit Ti. Claudio Caesari Aug(usto) Germanico;

[VI] utique quaecunque ex usu rei publicae maiestateque divinarum humanarum publicarum priuatarumque rerum esse censebit, ei agere facere ius potestasque sit, ita uti divo Aug(usto), Tiberioque Iulio Caesari Aug(usto), Tiberioque Claudio Caesari Aug(usto) Germanico fuit;

[VII] utique quibus legibus plebeive scitis scriptum fuit, ne divus Aug(ustus), Tiberiusve Iulius Caesar Aug(ustus), Tiberiusque Claudius Caesar Aug(ustus) Germanicus tenerentur, iis legibus plebisque scitis imp(erator) Caesar Vespasianus solutus sit; quaeque ex quaque lege rogatione divum Aug(ustum), Tiberiumve Iulium Caesarem Aug(ustum), Tiberiumve Claudium Caesarem Aug(ustum) Germanicum facere oportuit, ea omnia imp(eratori) Caesari Vespasiano Aug(usto) facere liceat;

[VIII] utique quae ante hanc legem rogatam acta gesta decreta imperata ab imperatore Caesare Vespasiano Aug(usto) iussu mandatuve eius a quoque sunt, ea perinde iusta rataq(ue) sint, ac si populi plebisve iussu acta essent.

Sanctio. Si quis huiusce legis ergo adversus leges rogationes plebisve scita senatusve consulta fecit fecerit, sive quod eum ex lege rogatione plebisve scito s(enatus)ve c(onsulto) facere oportebit, non fecerit huius legis ergo, id ei ne fraudi esto, neve quit ob eam rem populo dare debeto, neve cui de ea re actio neve iudicatio esto, neve quis de ea re apud [s]e agi sinito.

Glossary of Terms and Expressions

Terms preceded by an asterisk () have their own entries in the Glossary. Where a widely accepted English equivalent for a Latin term exists (for example, client), it will be used, with the Latin original supplied in parentheses. Otherwise the Latin term is provided.*

ab epistulis. A secretaryship within the imperial administration: the secretary *ab epistulis* was in charge of imperial correspondence.

a bibliothecis. A secretaryship within the imperial administration: the secretary *a bibliothecis* was secretary “for libraries.” The precise duties of this position are uncertain, but may have included oversight of public libraries in Rome.

adlection (*adlectio*). Properly, the inducting of a new member into a given *order (esp. equestrian or senatorial), but used most frequently of admission into the senate. Adlection was originally a power invested in the office of *censor, which came to be subsumed by the emperor (whether formally a censor or not). The new member of the senate could be advanced with varying degrees of seniority (for example, to the level of an ex-praetor).

adoption. There were two kinds of adoption in Rome: *adoptio*, which was a private arrangement between two families, and *adrogatio*, which required the presence of both adopter and adoptee before the *Comitia Curiata*. In the latter case, the adoptee was not only transferred into the adopter’s family, but also into his *gens* and tribe. In the case of a male, the *alumnus* (the adopted son) assumed the adoptive father’s **nomen*, and took a **cognomen* that indicated his original family. Adoption was a fairly common practice in ancient Rome, particularly in the upper classes, and did not require that the *alumnus* (or *alumna*) lack parents. In many cases it was motivated by the adoptive father’s lack of a male heir, but this was not the only reason: much like elite marriage, adoption could be used to cement political alliances between families, as well as to boost the prospects for the *alumnus* (who would now enjoy the support of two families). Before and especially after the Flavian Age, adoption would be used by emperors to designate imperial successors.

adventus (arrival). The ceremonial entry of the emperor into a city (cf. **profectio*). This was almost always a special event and was by the Flavian period a regular part of imperial ritual.

aedile (*aedilis*). A junior magistrate at Rome who had superintendence of various public structures and institutions. Four aediles were elected annually at Rome. Their responsibilities included supervision and maintenance of public buildings (temples, theaters, baths, etc.), oversight of

public festivals and games, management of markets and the grain supply, and general maintenance of order in the city.

aerarium (properly *aerarium populi Romani*). The original public treasury of the Roman state (cf. **fiscus*). It was located in the Temple of Saturn in the *Forum Romanum* and overseen by *quaestors (the *quaestores aerarii*) or *praetors (the *praetores aerarii*). An additional treasury, the *aerarium militare* (military treasury), was created by Augustus in 6 CE to provide for the pensioning of discharged soldiers.

Agri Decumates. The wedged-shaped section of land formed between the upper reaches of the Rhine and Danube. It was annexed to the Roman empire by Vespasian, a process completed around 75, resulting in a significant improvement in east–west communication.

alumnus/alumna. See under “adoption”.

amicitia (friendship). A cooperative relationship in Roman socio-political life, often of a political rather than personal nature. *Amicitia* could exist between Rome and another state, as well as between two individuals; it involved no legal obligations as such, but was nonetheless a powerful bond. To be an *amicus* (friend) of a more powerful figure was a considerable honor. In the early Principate, *amicitia* became a constituent element of the emerging imperial system: the *amici* of the emperor (sometimes *amici Augusti*, friends of Augustus) comprised, along with family members and imperial freedmen, his court. To be numbered among the emperor’s *amici* thus conferred immense prestige and usually great power and influence as well. Conversely, for the emperor formally to withdraw his *amicitia* was a devastating blow, tantamount to being declared a criminal.

amicus (friend, pl. *amici*). See under “amicitia”.

amphitheater. A Roman arena of elliptical form, used principally to stage gladiatorial fights (**munera*). Such events could be staged in temporary structures, but many Roman cities had a permanent amphitheater by the Flavian period. The largest and most important such structure was the Flavian Amphitheater (or “Colosseum”) located in the heart of Rome, dedicated in 80 CE, with an estimated capacity of around 50 000 spectators.

angusticlavus/angustus clavus. See under “toga”.

annona (means of subsistence, grain). The supply of grain brought to Rome, distributed free (via a monthly “dole”) to many citizens, and otherwise sold at regulated prices. As the needs of the city’s roughly one million inhabitants (see APPENDIX 2) could hardly be met by the surrounding regions, it was reliant on grain imports from elsewhere in the empire, above all Sicily, Egypt, and North Africa. Supervision of the grain supply was entrusted to a *prefect, the *praefectus annonae*.

Antonines. Line of three emperors, beginning with Antoninus Pius (r. 138–161 CE), who adopted and was succeeded by Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180 CE), and ending with the latter’s son Commodus (r. 180–192 CE).

a rationibus. A secretaryship within the imperial administration: the secretary *a rationibus* was something like a minister of finance.

Arval Brothers (*Fratres Arvales*, Brothers of the Fields). A college of 12 priests belonging to the Roman state religion, whose responsibilities included the offering of annual sacrifices to the appropriate deities in order to guarantee a good harvest. The “Acts of the Arval Brothers” (*Acta Arvalia*), the records of this priesthood, were inscribed on marble tablets which have survived in a significant quantity, providing modern scholars with one of the largest and most important bodies of inscriptions from ancient Roman times.

as (pl. *asses*). A Roman coin of modest value, worth one-quarter of a **sestertius* in the early imperial period.

a studiis. A secretaryship within the imperial administration: the secretary *a studiis* was secretary “for studies.” The precise duties of this position are uncertain.

auctoritas. A more complex term than its English derivative “authority,” *auctoritas* speaks to the general level of prestige, authority, and influence that an individual possessed in Roman society

by virtue of largely subjective but broadly perceived qualities such as reputation, public stature, descent and dignity. Political *auctoritas* meant the ability to persuade, to rally support to a particular cause or position. *Auctoritas* was a more or less permanent quality, independent of any office, appointment or command than an individual might (or might not) hold at any particular moment.

augur. A member of a priestly **collegium* (college) that practiced augury, that is, the foretelling of the future by reading the will of the gods, which was thought to be communicated (to those who could read the signs, at least) through natural phenomena, above all the flight of birds. In the latter case, relevant indicators included the species of bird observed, the direction of flight, any noises made, and so on. Such readings of divine will (“taking the auspices”) were an essential preliminary to any major public undertaking, including those in the military sphere.

Augustales. Members of a priestly college (or something very much like it) found in many cities and towns of the Roman empire, that was in charge of maintenance of the imperial cult. In addition to organizing sacrifices etc. in this capacity, Augustales, who were usually wealthy **freedmen*, generally acted as public benefactors, funding public building projects, providing public entertainments, and so on. After serving a one-year term, Augustales retained a rank and status just below that of town councilors. The college thus served as a vehicle by which rich freedmen, legally barred from holding civic magistracies, might garner prestige and political influence.

Augustus (revered one). An honorific **cognomen* taken by Octavian in 27 BCE, which became a regular title taken by subsequent emperors, including the Flavians. Roman etymologists connected the term to, inter alia, **auctoritas* (authority).

Aula Regia (Royal Hall). The great reception hall of the **Domus Flavia* (Flavian Palace) on the Palatine Hill in Rome.

aureus (pl. *aurei*). A gold coin valued at 25 **denarii*.

auxilia (auxiliaries). In the Roman military, the standing corps of non-citizen soldiers, serving alongside the citizen legions, but for longer terms and less pay; upon discharge auxiliaries were given Roman citizenship. By the Flavian periods, auxiliaries comprised about 60% of Roman land forces, and nearly all of its cavalry, archers, slingers, and other specialized combatants. Auxiliary units were usually of 500 or 1000 men, serving under Roman officers of equestrian rank known as **prefects*.

“bread and circuses” (*panem et circenses*). An expression coined by the satirist Juvenal (*Sat.* 10.81) to designate the public provision of free food and entertainment in Rome. The food came primarily from the **annona* in the form of a grain dole (*frumentationes*), that is, monthly rations of grain for qualifying poorer citizens (the *plebs frumentaria*, numbering around 200 000 in the early Empire). The entertainment entailed a steady provision of free public spectacles (**ludi*, **munera*, etc.). For the cynical, Juvenal included, this was an imperial strategy aimed at pacifying the so-called “urban mob” and thereby avoiding unrest in the capital.

Caesar. Under the Empire, the **cognomen* of Gaius Julius Caesar was a regular imperial title, gradually morphing into a political term (it has lived on as such in modern languages in words such as “Kaiser”). By the Flavian period its use to designate an imperial successor was also well established. The name was originally passed on to Octavian/Augustus, after he was posthumously adopted by Caesar. In 4 CE, in order to designate *his* successor, Augustus adopted the future emperor Tiberius as Tiberius Julius Caesar. A precedent was thereby established for designating an imperial successor through adoption (where necessary) and conferral of the name *Caesar*. Galba, the fleeting first emperor after the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, helped to consolidate this twofold practice by using it to designate Lucius Calpurnius Piso as his successor in 68. Upon his accession Vespasian gave the name to both his sons, though other gestures made it evident that Titus (now Titus Flavius Caesar Vespasianus) was the *immediate* successor.

Camenae. In Roman religion a group of goddesses with various early associations who had a sacred grove and spring near the Porta Capena at Rome; by the third century BCE they had become associated with the Greek Muses, and were often invoked by writers as sources of literary inspiration.

Capitolia. Quinquennial Games, instituted by Domitian, which included literary competitions.

Capitol. See “Capitoline Hill”.

Capitoline Hill (*Mons Capitolinus*). One of Rome’s seven hills, centrally located and overlooking the Forum Romanum. It was an important religious site: on its height stood the great temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus; an older shrine to Terminus (god of boundaries) was enclosed within the temple.

Capitolium. See “Capitoline Hill”.

censor. An official responsible for generating the **census*. Under the Republic a pair of censors was elected every five years; but under the Principate such elections ceased, and the emperors themselves habitually assumed the office – Domitian had himself appointed *censor perpetuus* (censor for life). A crucial power of the censor was control over admission to and expulsion from the senatorial and equestrian orders. The censor was more broadly charged with a general supervision of public morals.

census. The official list of Roman citizens, conventionally generated every five years by the **censors*. It was traditionally restricted to Roman citizens, but a parallel census of all inhabitants of the empire was introduced under the Principate.

circus. A long and narrow arena in which Romans staged chariot races, a key component of **ludi*. At Rome the most important was the Circus Maximus, located in the valley between the Palatine and Aventine hills, with an estimated capacity of 150 000–250 000 spectators.

citizenship. A privileged legal and political status, including both rights and protections, enjoyed by freeborn Romans and “naturalized” members of the Roman state. Full Roman citizenship included immunity from certain taxes, the right to enter into a marriage recognized by Roman law (**conubium*), the right to own land and make contracts enforceable by Roman law (**commercium*), the right to make a Roman will (*ius testamenti faciendi*) as well as to benefit from one, the right to sue in court, the right to a trial, the right to legal appeal, the right to vote (often notional in the early imperial period), and the right to run for public office. Roman women had a limited form of citizenship, as did **freedmen* (who were, for example, barred from public office). By ancient standards, the Romans were generous in adding outsiders to the citizen body. They also conferred various forms of intermediate status, such as the **Latin* right and **Junian Latin* status, which offered some of the benefits of citizenship.

city prefect. See under “urban prefect”.

client (*cliens*, pl. *clientes*). The figure of lesser socio-economic standing in a **patronage* relationship. Clients typically enjoyed various forms of support from their patron, often including financial assistance and food. In return they offered various forms of respect to their patron. A freed slave automatically became the client of his or her former master.

client kingdom. A nominally independent state, often bordering Roman territory, that had agreed to further Roman interests in return for Roman protection. The appointment of a new ruler in a client kingdom was normally contingent upon Roman approval.

cognomen. See under “nomenclature”.

collegium (association, pl. *collegia*). An association of people with a common interest or function, be it professional (sometimes akin to guilds), social (sometimes akin to modern clubs), or religious – in which case the standard English term is “college.” The Roman state religion had four major priestly colleges: the *collegium pontificum* (college of pontiffs, including, inter alia, the **pontifex maximus*, the lesser **pontifices*, the **flamines*, and the **Vestals*), the **augurs*, the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis* (who maintained and interpreted the Sibylline Books), and the *epulones* (who organized feasts on **festival* days).

colonia (settlement). Originally a Roman settlement in conquered territory; but the term came to designate a new Roman city established anywhere in the empire, often to settle discharged veterans. All approved inhabitants – who were, or were made, Roman citizens – would receive an allotment of land from duly appointed officials, the *triumviri coloniae deducendae*. The practice of founding *coloniae*, still important in the Flavian period, would fade out, as no longer necessary, in the second century CE.

Colosseum. See under “amphitheater”.

comes (companion, pl. *comites*). Term often used in a quasi-technical sense of a close advisor of the emperor; also used of members of the retinue of friends, underlings and assistants that accompanied a magistrate to his province.

comitia. An assembly of Roman citizens to elect magistrates or attend to legislative or judicial matters. During the Republic these assemblies were vital organs of government; under the Principate they quickly atrophied, as their various elective, legislative, and judicial functions either became perfunctory or lapsed entirely.

commendatio. Under the Principate, a recommendation by the emperor of particular candidates for the consulship and other magistracies. The list was often provided by letter or by posting the names of the favored candidates. By the Flavian period, imperial *commendatio* had taken on a virtually binding force.

commentarii principis. The court journal maintained by individual emperors, containing notes on a range of matters, including military campaigns and legal matters (edicts, rescripts, etc.). It was a secret document, reserved for the use of the emperor and his successors.

commercium (commerce, business). Term used in a technical sense of the right to own Roman land and to make contracts with Roman citizens that were enforceable by Roman law. In addition to Roman citizens, this right was enjoyed by those with the *Latin right, by *Junian Latins, and could be extended to other non-Romans as well.

congiarium. Largesse to the urban citizen population, originally the distribution of wine and oil (from *congius*, a measure for liquids such as oil), but in the early imperial period *congiarium* meant rather the distribution of money. Like the *donative distributed to soldiers, this came to be an expected periodic act of generosity on the part of the emperor.

consecratio. See under “divus”.

consilium (advice; sometimes *consilium principis*, advisors to the *princeps*). The trusted inner group of advisors (or “privy council”) to the emperor, a semi-official and fluctuating body. Some members of the *consilium* enjoyed the emperor’s *amicitia, while others, such as the *praetorian prefect, might belong to it by virtue of their office.

consul. The highest magistracy of the Roman *Republic; two consuls were elected annually, taking office on January 1, and becoming in effect joint heads of state. Under the Principate, the consulship lost much of its power, but continued eagerly to be sought by senators as an honorary office; holding the consulship three times in one’s career remained a cherished goal. If a regularly appointed consul (the ordinary consul or *consul ordinarius*) died in office or resigned, a suffect consul (*consul suffectus*) was appointed to complete the one-year term. As the Principate evolved, the practice of resignation after a brief tenure of office became a regular expedient, allowing the consulship to be “shared” and thereby satisfying the aristocratic yearning for public honor. In the Flavian period a given year would typically see seven or eight consuls. The ordinary consulship held greater prestige, though, as the names of the two ordinary consuls were recorded in the *Fasti and used to mark the year.

consular imperium. See under “imperium”.

consular insignia. (*ornamenta/insignia consularia*). The ornaments or insignia of the consular office, which could be awarded separately by the emperor as a particular honor, which afforded the recipient the status of an ex-consul, though he had not actually held the office.

conubium. The right to enter into a marriage recognized by Roman law. This recognition required both bride and groom needed to possess *conubium* – whether as Roman citizens, holders of the *Latin right, or some like status.

correctio morum (reform of morals). A campaign undertaken by the emperor Domitian in his capacity as censor, which included revival and strict enforcement of Augustan moral legislation and other stern measures.

curia. Under the empire, any building in which government business was conducted. In Rome the curia was located in the *Forum Romanum* and served as a meeting place for the senate.

cursus honorum (sequence of offices). The prescribed sequence of magistracies, each with a minimum age requirement, that were regarded as the essential stages of a successful senatorial career at Rome. By the Flavian period there was also an established *cursus honorum* for an equestrian career, which like its senatorial counterpart, involved a combination of civil and military posts. For senatorial careers in the early imperial period the sequence normally began with the *vigintivirate*, followed by a short period of military service (typically as a *military tribune). One then became a candidate for the *quaestorship (20 chosen annually), with which office came membership in the senate. After the quaestorship one ran for *aedile (16 vacancies) or for tribune of the plebs. The next step was election to the *praetorship (12 vacancies). This was often followed by an administrative post, either at Rome or in the provinces. The crowning achievement was to become *consul (two vacancies annually, but *suffect consulships typically added to this number).

cursus publicus. See “vehiculatio”.

damnatio memoriae. (condemnation of memory). An official form of postmortem dishonor enacted by the senate whereby an individual deemed to have brought discredit to the Roman state was effectively erased from public record. Such erasure could entail the destruction of images, the removal of names from monuments and public records, and even the annulment of decisions. Domitian was the first Roman emperor to be formally condemned in this way.

declamation (*declamatio*). The delivery of a set speech on a designated topic, an exercise employed by teachers of rhetoric to train their students for public speaking. The Romans practiced two forms of declamation in particular: the *suasoria*, a deliberative speech advocating a particular course of action in a hypothetical (but often historical or pseudo-historical) situation, which trained for the council, senate, etc.; and the *controversia*, a forensic speech advocating one side of a fictional law case, which trained for the courts. By the Flavian period *declamationes* were not only school exercises, but also a popular form of public entertainment.

decurion. Councilor of a **colonia* or **municipium*. The decurions ran local government as members of the local council, attending to legislation, managing public funds etc. Decurions were the most powerful political figures at the local level, and held their position for life. The office was normally open only to a community’s wealthier and more respected members.

delator (pl. *delatores*; informer). One who denounces another as having committed an illegal or otherwise punishable deed (the term derives from *nomen deferre*, “to hand in the name” of the accused to a magistrate). In the early Empire this term was used in particular of those who made false accusations against their own or imperial enemies to the emperor.

denarius (pl. *denarii*). A Roman coin made of silver, originally valued at 10 bronze **asses*, but revalued to 16 asses, or 4 sesterces, in the second century BCE.

dignitas. More complex than English “dignity,” this term denotes the overall sense of a person’s worth, the honor and sense of respect that was his due. *Dignitas* was a matter of great importance to aristocratic Roman men.

divus (deified). This designation was a postmortem honor conferred by the senate, which was invested with the authority to perform a *consecratio*, that is, to pass a resolution declaring that a

deceased individual (almost invariably an emperor or a member of the imperial family) had become a god. The *consecratio* of a deceased emperor, when it occurred, was normally requested by his successor.

domi (at home). Locative case of the noun **domus* (house, home), sometimes used in a quasi-technical sense to designate the area within the **pomerium*.

dominus et deus (Master and God). An appellative that, in the view of some scholars, Domitian insisted upon for himself after becoming emperor.

domus (house, home). An individual Roman household.

Domus Aurea (Golden House). A vast and lavish landscaped villa constructed by Nero at the heart of Rome after the fire of 64.

Domus Flavia (also “Flavian Palace”). The immense imperial palace on the Palatine Hill in Rome, completed in 92 under Domitian.

donative (*donativum*). A special gift of money made to the soldiery by an emperor. This gift might be made to a specific group (especially the politically influential **praetorian guard*), or to the entire soldiery. In either case, each soldier received a sum that varied according to military branch and individual rank. The purpose of the donative was, in the broadest terms, to ensure loyalty. By the Flavian period it was standard practice for an emperor to provide a donative on his accession; he might also make such a gift as a reward for or inducement to loyal conduct.

dupondius (pl. *dupondii*). A brass coin valued at two **asses* (or one-half of a **sestertius*).

duovir. See “duumvir”.

duumvir. (“one of two men”; pl. *duumviri*; also *duovir*, *duoviri*). In the most general sense, one of two magistrates jointly holding power in some capacity (on a commission, in a court, vel sim.). By the Flavian period the term had come to be more specifically associated with the pair of chief magistrates of a **colonia*, or other town or city with full status; they directed its general administration and presided over the local council. The duumvirate was thus, broadly speaking, the municipal counterpart to the office of consul in Republican Rome. Like the consulship, it was an elected office that was held for a term of one year; in most towns, one could only become a *duumvir* after holding the office of aedile.

edict (*edictum*, pl. *edicta*). An edict or proclamation issued by a magistrate; under the Principate, edicts issued by the emperor constituted a chief form of imperial legislation.

emperor. See under “imperator” and “princeps”.

Empire, Roman. This term is used in two senses: (i) to designate the historical period after the fall of the **Republic*, in which Rome and its territories were ruled by an emperor, beginning with Augustus in 27 BCE; the first phase of this period, extending until 284 CE, may also be referred to as the **Principate*; (ii) to designate the collection of territories and peoples under Roman dominion in any period. In this volume usage is distinguished by capitalization: “(Roman) Empire” for the first sense, “(Roman) empire” for the second.

epicedion (from Greek ἐπικήδειον sc. μέλος). A poem (or speech) in honor of the dead.

equestrian (*eques*, “horseman”). A “knight” or member of the second order of Roman nobility.

Equestrians – the name derives from the fact that members of this order had originally served as cavalrymen in the Roman army – ranked immediately below senators in the Roman social hierarchy, and had a minimum property requirement of 400 000 *sestertii*. Under the Empire, this class provided much of the officer corps in the army; it also filled a variety of important posts in civil administration (particularly through the position of **procurator*) – a notable expansion from the late Republic, when the equestrian order was essentially a business class.

euergetism. The practice whereby wealthy or high-status individuals in Greek cities made gifts to their communities, funding festivals, buildings, or other public amenities. Such gift giving, which developed in the Hellenistic period and continued under Roman domination, was ostensibly a free choice, but it was widely seen as a moral obligation.

familia. When applied to the domestic sphere, this term refers to all individuals under the authority of a *paterfamilias*, whether blood relations or not. *See also under* “domus”.

fascēs. *See under* “lictor”.

fasti. The name given to the calendar listing the days on which different kinds of legal and public business (for example, meetings of assemblies) could (*dies fasti*) and could not (*dies nefasti*) take place. The term *fasti* was also used of other lists, including those of consuls (*fasti consulares*, which recorded the names of the year’s two ordinary consuls) and of priests (*fasti sacerdotes*), and records of triumphs.

feriae. Holidays, including *festival days, of which the Romans observed a great number, with restrictions on work and public business.

festival days. Days set aside for religious reasons, with restrictions on work and public business (for example, the courts were closed). An important part of many festival days was the accompanying production of **ludi*.

fiscus (properly *fiscus Caesaris*). The imperial treasury, that is, all the public money that was under the personal control of the emperor. The establishment of the *fiscus*, a separate entity wholly independent of the **aerarium*, was an important development of the early Empire. The largest single concern of the *fiscus* was funding the Roman military in all its aspects.

fiscus Alexandrinus. A special treasury established by Vespasian to manage a new poll tax exacted upon citizens of the city of Alexandria who, unlike other Egyptians, had previously been exempt from this form of Roman taxation.

fiscus Iudaicus (Jewish treasury). A special treasury established by Vespasian to manage a new poll tax exacted upon all Jews in the Roman empire. The tax was in essence a Roman appropriation of the annual tax (two drachmas) formerly paid by Jews for the maintenance of the Temple at Jerusalem (which had been destroyed by Roman forces under Titus in 70). Whereas the original temple tax had been exacted only upon adult Jewish males, Vespasian extended its application to include women and children.

flamen (priest, pl. *flamines*). A priest dedicated to a particular deity. There were 15 *flamines* in the Roman state religion, the most important of whom was the *flamen dialis*, who oversaw the cult of Jupiter. Under the Principate, the cult of a deified emperor (**divus*) also had a *flamen* assigned to it.

Flavian Amphitheater. *See under* “amphitheater”.

Flavian Palace. *See under* “Domus Flavia”.

forum (pl. *fora*). A designated central open area of every Roman city and town, in which political, judicial, and commercial business was conducted. The forum was regarded as the “heart” of a Roman town. Large cities might have more than one forum. Rome itself had several, the earliest being the *Forum Romanum*.

Forum Romanum (Roman Forum). *See under* “forum”.

fossatum (ditch). A linear defensive structure, manned by soldiers and normally extended along a frontier as a form of perimeter defense.

fratres arvales. *See* “Arval Brothers”.

freedman/freedwomen (*libertus/liberta*). A freed (or manumitted) slave. It was a remarkable feature of Roman law that nearly all slaves granted their freedom by Roman owners were also given Roman *citizenship (with some restrictions). The former owner automatically became the *patron of the manumitted slave. As a citizen, the slave needed a Roman name, which was usually the former owner’s **nomen* (whence, for example, *Flavius* Josephus).

gens (pl. *gentes*). A clan (or extended family) claiming descent from a common ancestor. *See also under* “nomenclature”.

gladiatorial shows. *See* “munera”.

grain supply. *See* “annona”.

grammaticus (pl. *grammatici*). A teacher, responsible for providing instruction in both Latin and Greek grammar and literature (and sometimes other topics, such as history and geography). A student would normally begin learning from a *grammaticus* around age 11 or 12, and continue until about 15, at which point those continuing their education would proceed to instruction from a **rhetor*.

homo novus (or *novus homo*, new man, pl. *homines novi*). The first member of a family to become a Roman senator. The term is sometimes used more specifically of the first member of a family to be elected to the consulship.

imago (images, pl. *imagines*). A portrait, usually made of wax, of a deceased ancestor. Such *imagines* were normally displayed in the atrium of an upper class Roman home, and were carried in procession as part of the funeral rites of the Roman nobility.

imperator (commander). Originally the term for a military commander as well as the acclamation for a victorious general, *imperator* retained a dual usage in the imperial titulature: (i) it was the stock appellation used in an imperial **salutation*, and as an imperial **cognomen* it was not a title as such but a record of how many times the emperor had received such a salutation; (ii) *imperator* had also been adopted by Augustus and his successors as an imperial **praenomen* – and so it also became a permanent title and one of the standard ways to address and refer to the emperor (and indeed is the Latin term from which the modern word “emperor” derives). Over time *imperator*, which more accurately reflected the underlying political reality, came to displace **princeps* as an imperial designation.

imperial province. See under “province”.

imperium. A complex term referring to power invested in collectives or particular individuals, especially that of magistrates or emperors. *Imperium* designates the right to command in war, to administer laws, and to impose the death penalty (subject to appeal in the case of a Roman citizen). Certain individuals, often ex-magistrates, were given particular grants of *imperium* to equip them for special appointments, such as provincial governorships. These grants of *imperium* were often equivalent to the holder of a particular office, as with **consular imperium* (*imperium consulare*, or “the power of a consul”). In order to endow the emperor with the capacity to overrule all other holders of *imperium* in virtually any situation he was normally granted **imperium maius* (“greater *imperium*”), which superseded that of all other holders. In a derived sense *imperium* could also refer to the geographical area in which the power was held (whence *imperium Romanum*, “the Roman empire”).

insignia consularia. See “consular insignia”.

ingerum (pl. *ingera*). A unit of land measure. One *ingerum* = 0.25 hectares = 0.625 acres.

ius Latii. See “Latin Right”.

ius trium liberorum (the right of three children). A set of privileges conferred upon citizens of both sexes who had produced three or more offspring; this *ius* was the product of Augustan moral legislation, and remained in effect in the Flavian period. The privileges included exemption from public service for men, and extraordinary inheritance rights for women. The *ius trium liberorum* could also be conferred upon an individual who had not produced the requisite number of children as an act of imperial benefaction.

Jewish tax. See “fiscus Iudaicus”.

Julio-Claudians. Line of five emperors descended from the Julian and Claudian families, starting with Augustus (r. 27 BCE–14 CE) and ending with Nero (r. 54–68 CE).

Junian Latin. A lesser status given to some manumitted slaves who did not qualify for Roman **citizenship* (as not yet 30 years old, or for other technical reasons). A Junian Latin had the right of **commercium*, but not **conubium* or *testamenti factio* (the right to make and benefit from a Roman will).

Juvenalia. An annual festival in honor of the goddess Minerva, instituted by Domitian and celebrated at his Alban villa. Literary competitions were an important component of the festival.

knight. See “equestrian”.

Latin right (*ius Latii* or simply *Latium*) referred originally to a legal status conferred upon certain Latin municipalities from 338 BCE, which included the right of marriage (*conubium*) and commerce (*commercium*) with Romans, as well as citizenship for Latins settling in Rome and vice-versa. In the late Republic and early Principate the Latin right lost any real association with particular ethnic groups: it was a status conferred on many provincial municipalities – including much of Spain under the Flavians. The practical consequences of acquiring the *ius Latii* are not entirely understood, but one important element was the automatic granting of Roman citizenship to local magistrates upon the completion of their term of office.

laticlavus/latus clavus. See under “toga”.

laudatio. Public praise of an individual, particularly in the form of a panegyric or a eulogy at a funeral.

lectio senatus (selection for the senate). A review of the list of senators, carried out by the *censor, who would add new members he deemed worthy, as well as strike from the list those he considered unworthy.

legate (Latin *legatus* pl. *legati*). A versatile term used in a variety of senses, properly referring to an officer holding delegated *imperium (as opposed to holding it in his own right). The term frequently designates a senior military officer, often the commander of a *legion, appointed by the overall commander; it can also refer to a high-ranking assistant to a provincial governor; under the Principate, it often refers to an official who governed an *imperial province in the emperor’s name and by his appointment.

legion (*legio*). The largest organizational unit of the Roman army. A legion in the early Principate had roughly 5200 infantrymen and 120 legionary cavalry. Each legion had its own number and honorific title (for example, IV *Flavia Felix*, a new legion formed by Vespasian), and was usually commanded by a senior military officer (normally of senatorial rank) referred to as a *legate. A fighting force of multiple legions would be under the authority of an overall commander.

lex (law, pl. *leges*). A statute passed by a citizen assembly or issued by the emperor. A *lex* was generally referred to thereafter by the name of its proposer, often accompanied by a qualifying phrase (in the form *de* + ablative) indicating its sphere of application. So, for example, *lex Julia de adulteriis* = the Julian law [proposed by Augustus] concerning [the punishment of] adultery.

libellus. Diminutive of *liber* (book), so meaning “little book” or sometimes “pamphlet.” The term often designated in particular a work written out on pages (like a modern book) rather than on scrolls. More informally, *libellus* could be used modestly (by the author) or disparagingly (by a critic) to refer to literary works of modest length, for example, a short collection of poems. The term also had various technical senses: *libelli accusatorum* were the written accusations presented in a court case; *libelli famosi* were invectives or lampoons criticizing a particular individual.

libertus/liberta. See “freedman / freedwoman”.

lictor. An official attendant to a Roman magistrate, charged with both escorting the magistrate and assisting him in the performance of his office. The number of lictors assigned varied according to the importance of the office, with consuls, the highest magistrates of the Republic, having 12. Lictors generally walked before the magistrate, and carried the *fascēs* (a bundle of wooden rods containing an ax with its blade projecting) as a symbol of his authority.

limes (boundary). This term, which originally referred to access ways between plots of farmland, and in the Flavian period was used of military access ways that extended into enemy territory, eventually came to designate a fortified boundary marking the outward borders of the Roman empire.

ludi (games; cf. *munera). Live public entertainments of various kinds, including chariot races (*ludi circenses*) and theatrical events (*ludi scaenici*). Such entertainments were almost always free, being funded by officials or private individuals, either on a regular basis (for example, an

- annual religious festival) or as a special occasion. In Rome such events were always put on by the emperor, a member of the imperial family, or a magistrate on the emperor's behalf.
- macellum** (market). The market area of a town or city, usually square in shape and built alongside the *forum, with shops arranged around a central courtyard.
- Magna Graecia** (Greater Greece; Greek Μεγάλη Ἑλλάς). The areas of southern Italy and Sicily that had been settled by Greek colonists starting in the eighth century BCE, which retained a marked Greek cultural influence after coming under Roman control.
- mandatum** (pl. *mandata*). An imperial command or instruction issued to a subordinate, especially a provincial governor.
- manus** (hand). *See under* "marriage".
- marriage**. Roman marriage entailed an agreement between families, and so was often motivated by political or social considerations rather than being romantically driven. This was particularly true among the upper classes, for whom a shift in political alliance often necessitated divorce and remarriage to reflect the new arrangement. The principal concrete objective of marriage was the production of legitimate children. A legally recognized Roman marriage required both parties to possess the right of **conubium*. There were different forms of marriage. The most restrictive, from the woman's point of view, was *manus* (hand), a form of marriage that placed the wife and her property under the absolute control of the husband. This form had decreased significantly by the end of the Republic, in favor of "free" or *sine manu* marriage, which did not significantly alter the woman's status.
- military tribune**. *See* "tribune, military".
- munera**. (pl. of *munus*, obligation, duty; cf. **ludi*). The term is used in a quasi-technical sense of public spectacles, and in particular gladiatorial shows. These were usually provided by members of the imperial family at Rome and by local magistrates elsewhere.
- municipium** (pl. *municipia*). A town or city located within the Roman empire, subject to Roman rule but enjoying a considerable measure of local autonomy. Most *municipia* were organized institutionally on the Roman model, with a senate-like council and magistrates, and passed their own laws.
- new man**. *See* "homo novus".
- nomen**. *See under* "nomenclature".
- nomenclature**. A male Roman citizen in the imperial period generally had three names: *praenomen*, *nomen*, *cognomen*. Of these the *nomen* identified the family or clan (*gens*). This was preceded by a *praenomen*, or personal name, such as Gaius, Marcus or Titus, of which there were about a dozen in common use. The third name, or *cognomen* could be a hereditary name identifying a branch of the *gens*, or a name adopted as a personal distinction, such as *Germanicus* (taken by Domitian for his German military campaigns). Prominent men might have more than one *cognomen*, and emperors almost invariably had several. Women had no *praenomen* and rarely had a *cognomen*; a woman's name derived from the feminine form of her father's *nomen*, with the additional of *maior/minor* or numerical indicators (*prima, secunda*, etc.) used to distinguish between multiple daughters.
- novus homo**. *See* "homo novus".
- order** (*ordo*). In a socio-political sense, a rank or class of Roman citizens, as determined by the *census, ranging from the senatorial to the lower orders. Wealth was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for membership in the upper orders: a property qualification of 1 000 000 sesterces was required for membership in the senatorial order, but very few who met that qualification were senators.
- ornamenta consularia**. *See* "consular insignia".
- otium** (leisure). A complex term with a variety of senses. In reference to upper class Roman culture it refers to leisure time in which a person withdrew from daily political or business matters in order to engage in "cultured" activities that were considered uplifting or enlightening – including

contemplation, writing, learned discussion (esp. of philosophy). *Otium* in this sense was particularly associated with the magnificent rural villas of the elite, whence the owner and invited guests withdrew to escape from the frenetic pace and pressures of urban life, above all at Rome.

ovation (*ovatio*). A victory celebration, on a much smaller scale than a *triumph, held in Rome to honor a general for a successful military campaign. In an *ovatio* the general rode through the city on horseback rather than in a chariot.

panem et circenses. See “bread and circuses”.

paterfamilias. The head of a *domus, or Roman household. Roman law granted the *paterfamilias* absolute power (*patria potestas*) over all members of his family and slaves within the home, extending (in theory more than in practice) to the power of life and death.

pater patriae (father of the fatherland). An honorific title originally accorded to Romulus, Rome’s legendary founder. It was revived in the late Republic as an honorific for those performing great deeds on behalf of the *res publica* – Cicero received it in 63 BCE for suppressing the conspiracy of Catiline – and it was conferred on Augustus by the senate in 2 BCE. His successor Tiberius declined the senate’s offer of the title, but most subsequent emperors, including all three Flavians, had it bestowed upon them as a matter of course.

patrician. The original aristocracy of the early Roman Republic, which had, by the Flavian period, long since lost all but a few ceremonial privileges. The old patrician families were dying out, and emperors sometimes inducted distinguished individuals into the patriciate (as, for example, Vespasian did Agricola).

patrocinium. See “patronage”.

patron (*patronus*). The figure of greater socio-economic standing in a *patronage relationship.

patronage (*patrocinium*). An asymmetrical social relationship involving two free persons, one of greater socio-economic standing, the patron (*patronus*), and one of lesser socio-economic standing, the client (*cliens*). The patronage relationship (which was sometimes hereditary) involved reciprocal ties of favor and obligation. Clients typically enjoyed legal, professional and political support from their patrons, and might also receive financial assistance and food. For their part, clients offered various forms of respect, such as accompanying their *patronus* when he appeared in public (a large retinue was regarded as a mark of aristocratic prestige) or performing the morning *salutatio. Under the Republic clients had also canvassed and voted for their patron when he ran for office, but such support became increasingly irrelevant in the early Principate, as political appointments were no longer determined by the popular assemblies. Patronage was almost universally practiced in Roman society, and operated on all levels, so that a given individual might be both a patron to numerous social inferiors and client to a superior.

Pax Romana (Roman Peace). A term designating the lengthy period of relative peace and prosperity enjoyed by the Roman empire covering most of the first and second centuries CE, a period that saw relatively few major Roman campaigns of territorial expansion and few significant enemy incursions.

plebs. The broad body of Roman citizens who were not *patrician. In early Roman history the patrician–plebian distinction defined a hereditary aristocracy as against the common people, but this divide eroded over time and a new notion of aristocracy took its place. The term *plebs* nonetheless retained its popular usage as a designation for the mass of ordinary and poorer Roman citizens as against the elite classes.

pomerium. The religious boundary of a city, as duly defined by ritual, marking the space within which the will of the gods (*auspicia*) could be determined by augurs. It was often understood as a band including the city walls and a narrow strip inside and outside them, but this was not necessarily the case. At Rome, the *pomerium* also constituted a civil boundary, marking the exercise of political (within) and military (without) power and authority. The *pomerium* at Rome could be ritually extended (as it was in 75) to mark an expansion of the Roman empire, thereby linking it with Roman imperialism.

pontifex (priest, pl. *pontifices*). Member of one of the major divisions or “colleges” of Roman priests, who regulated ritual and punished offenses against religion. There were about 15 *pontifices*, headed by the **pontifex maximus* (a position usually held by the emperor in the early imperial period).

pontifex maximus (supreme priest). The head of the *collegium pontificum* (college of pontiffs), and supreme figure of the Roman state religion. The role of the *pontifex maximus* was to oversee and regulate the Roman state religion in order to preserve the *pax deorum* (divine approval of the Roman state). From the reign of Augustus onwards, this office was always held by the emperor.

praefectus. See “prefect”.

praefectus urbi. See “urban prefect”.

praenomen. See under “nomenclature”.

praetor. A magistrate appointed annually and, like the **consul*, invested with **imperium*. The praetorship was an important step on the senatorial **cursus honorum*, as well as the usual (though not mandatory) prerequisite for a legionary command. In the Flavian period 12 praetors were appointed annually, all assigned particular spheres of authority, which might reflect the traditional function of guardianship of the law, or might involve such activities as organizing and financing public games. The *praetor urbanus* (urban praetor) was the chief magistrate for the administration of justice, presiding over civil cases between citizens. He was required to reside in Rome for the term of his office, with only brief absences permitted. At the beginning of his term, each urban praetor issued the *edictum praetoris* (praetor’s edict), a declaration of legal principles he intended to follow in administering justice.

praetorian guard. An elite military corps, instituted by Augustus, which served as the emperor’s bodyguard. Praetorians enjoyed greater pay and more favorable terms of service than regular Roman soldiers; because they were the only significant military body stationed at Rome, they often played a crucial political role, above all in the selection of new emperors. Their commander was the praetorian prefect.

praetorian prefect (*praefectus praetorio*). Commander of the *praetorian guard, a figure of considerable military and judicial authority. This was normally an equestrian post in the imperial period; Titus’ assumption of the post under Vespasian was an innovation.

prefect (*praefectus*). Strictly, a military or civil official whose authority was conferred through appointment by a higher ranking figure. (For the military prefect, see under “auxilia”). Under the Empire, “prefect” often designated an equestrian officer to whom particular responsibilities were assigned by the emperor. The four great prefectures were those of the City (*praefectus urbi*, or *urban prefect), the praetorian guard (*praefectus praetorio*, or *praetorian prefect), the grain supply (*praefectus annonae*) and the watch (*praefectus vigilum*). The urban prefecture was unusual for being a senatorial post, whereas the others were usually equestrian.

princeps (pl. *principes*). Under the Republic, an informal designation for a senator (or senators) whose political influence was preeminent, though still only a *primus inter pares* (first among equals). In his desire to create an appearance of continuity with Republican political forms, Augustus, the first Roman emperor, adopted this term to designate (and thereby dissimulate) the position of overwhelming power that he developed for himself and his imperial successors. From this usage arose the term Principate (*principatus*), designating the imperial political system inaugurated by Augustus, in which Republican political forms were retained – above all the senate – but real power was increasingly concentrated in the hands of a single individual, the *princeps* or emperor. The reign of an individual emperor is often referred to as his *principlate (note the lower case).

princeps iuventutis (leader of the youth). An honorific title that was often, in the early Empire, bestowed on eligible successors to the emperor, particularly members of his family. The title was given jointly to Titus and Domitian upon Vespasian’s accession.

Principate. *See under* “princeps”.

proconsul. A consul whose imperium was extended by the senate after his term of office. Such grants of consular imperium could also be bestowed upon a recipient who was neither currently nor recently a consul.

procurator (agent). Under the Principate this becomes the standard term for individuals, usually drawn from the *equestrian order, appointed by the emperor for various offices relating to civil administration. The term thus has an extremely broad remit. Among its various senses, it can designate the equestrian governor of an imperial *province; the chief financial officer of a province; a manager of imperial estates.

profectio (departure). The departure of the emperor from a city, usually Rome (cf. **adventus*). This was a regular part of imperial ritual by the Flavian period, often involving an elaborate formal ceremony (particularly in the case of a military *profectio*, that is, the emperor setting off for war), with important figures escorting the emperor out of the city.

province (*provincia*). A conquered territory that has been incorporated into the Roman empire, and defined as a distinct administrative unit. From the administrative point-of-view, there were two types of provinces, imperial and senatorial (the latter sometimes called “public”).

public province. *See under* “province”.

quaestor. An annual magistracy without **imperium*. Twenty quaestors were elected each year, to perform a variety of duties, both in Rome and elsewhere, which generally had to do with the state’s finances. Election to the quaestorship automatically conferred a seat in the senate, and so was the first major step in the **cursus honorum*.

quattuorvir (one of four men; pl. *quattuorviri*). In the most general sense, one of four magistrates jointly holding power in some capacity (on a commission, in a court, vel sim.). By the Flavian period the term had come to be more specifically associated with the four chief municipal magistrates of a **municipium*, who directed its general administration and presided over the local council.

Quiris (pl. *Quirites*). A term used to refer to a Roman citizen in his civil capacity (as opposed to *Romanus*, used of political and military capacity).

recitatio (recital). An organized public or private event featuring the reading out of all or part of a composition by the author or by a designated surrogate (such as a trained slave). This was a popular form of entertainment among the elite, and could also be an important step towards the publication of a literary work.

recusatio (refusal). 1. In a political sense, this term often refers to the rejection by the *princeps* of prerogatives and honors offered to him by the senate. Such gestures went back to Augustus, and had to do with the pretense of conformity with Republican precedents that was characteristic of the early *Principate. 2. In a literary sense, a programmatic passage in a poem or other work, often at or near its beginning, in which the writer declares his inability or disinclination to tackle the subject matter he initially set out to, and proceeds to compose on a different theme. The *recusatio* became something of a commonplace in poetry of the early imperial period, often used to excuse oneself for *not* writing in praise of the emperor or on related imperial themes.

regnum (the office or power of a king). A loaded word in the late Republic and early Empire, as it could refer to autocratic or despotic rule, as well as simply mean “kingdom.”

Republic, Roman. This term is used to designate the historical period in which Rome and its territories were ruled by a republican form of government. It began around 509 BCE and ended in 27 BCE when Augustus inaugurated the political system known as the *Principate. During the Republic, Rome was governed by a mixed constitutional system that was in constant evolution. The *senate was the preeminent political body, but various **comitia* (assemblies) exercised important elective, legislative, and judicial functions.

res publica (commonwealth). Very close to the modern notion of the “state,” *res publica* comprises everything that is of public interest, and so could be used in a broad sense to refer to the

- Roman empire as a whole, including all lands and residents (whose rights and obligations it determines). In this sense it has neither “republican” nor “imperial” connotations.
- rescript** (*rescriptum*). An emperor’s written reply to an appeal or petition, especially from a city; also, an emperor’s written response to an appeal for guidance on a legal point.
- rhetor** (pl. *rhetores*). A teacher, responsible for preparing an upper class Roman for participation in public life, above all through instruction in writing and giving speeches. A student would normally begin learning from a *rhetor* at age 15, after spending about three years with a **grammaticus*.
- rudis**. A wooden staff, possibly a wooden sword, used by gladiators (as well as by soldiers) in their training. When granted freedom – and with the option of “retirement” from arena combat – a gladiator was ceremoniously presented with a *rudis* as a symbol of that freedom. The *rudis* might be awarded to a gladiator who distinguished himself in a particular contest or sometimes for a string of victories.
- sacellum** (dim. form of *sacer*). A small shrine.
- sacerdos** (priest or priestess; pl. *sacerdotes*). A religious official whose duty it was to perform rituals on behalf of the state (or a defined subgroup thereof) whose aim was to maintain divine favor. In Rome there were various kinds of *sacerdotes*, including **augur* and **flamen*. The term *sacerdos* is a more general designation than **pontifex*, which is used only of the high priesthoods. Put another way, every *pontifex* was a *sacerdos*, but not every *sacerdos* was a *pontifex*.
- sacramentum**. The military oath of allegiance to the emperor.
- salutatio**. A formal morning visit paid by a client to his patron, as a sign of respect – and a common occasion on which to receive a **sportula*.
- salutation, imperial**. An occasion on which the emperor is hailed **imperator* by the soldiery, usually after a successful military campaign. The number of such salutations received by an emperor was recorded in the imperial titulature by supplying *imperator* as a **cognomen* with an accompanying numerical indication. (The title *imperator* was also taken as a **praenomen* by emperors from Augustus onwards.)
- sanctio**. In the context of legislation, a validation, specification or safeguard that comes at the end of a Roman statute (that is, a written law passed by the senate or another legislative body). The *sanctio* sometimes clarified the application of the law and its priority vis-à-vis other laws.
- Saturnalia**. A Roman festival in honor of the god Saturn, held December 17–23, during which social norms were suspended or even overturned – a master might, for example, serve dinner to his slaves. The festival included a sacrifice at the Temple of Saturn (in the Roman forum) and a public banquet.
- Second Sophistic**. A cultural and literary movement that took hold in the Greek-speaking world of the later first century CE and lasted until the third century. The movement was marked by a flourishing of Greek rhetoric and oratory that drew particular inspiration from the Greek orators of the fifth century BCE. It thus had a marked nostalgic element, striving for a kind of “classical revival” that reconnected Greeks under Roman domination with their glorious past.
- senate**. An ancient Roman political institution, whose function varied in different periods. Its members, called “senators,” were aristocrats who had to meet a minimum property qualification (1 000 000 sesterces in the Flavian period). The senate was the principal governing and legislative body of the evolved **Republic*. It was headed by two **consuls*, supreme magistrates who were elected annually. The consuls usually made decisions based on advice received from the assembled senators during meetings of the senate. After the transition to the **Principate*, the senate lost much of its power and autonomy to the **emperor* (who frequently presided over its meetings). It nonetheless remained an important political body in the early Principate, and an institution of great prestige. An individual gained admission to the senate – thereby becoming a senator – either by being elected to the office of **quaestor* or by **adlection*; if deemed unfit he

could be removed through the decision of the *censor (for example, through the performance of a **lectio senatus*).

senator. See under “senate”.

senatorial province. See under “province”.

senatus consultum (advice of the senate). A decree passed by a majority vote of the *senate.

During the *Republic these decrees were, technically speaking, merely advice submitted to a magistrate or referred to an assembly. In the early imperial period, however, as the assemblies (or **comitia*) atrophied, their legislative powers became perfunctory and were eventually transferred to the senate, so that *senatus consulta* came to acquire the force of law.

sestertius (pl. *sestertii* (sesterces)). In the early Empire the basic Roman bronze coin (it had originally been silver), valued at one quarter of a **denarius*, and used as the standard unit of denomination for specifying sums of money.

sine manu. See under “marriage”.

sodales Flaviales. A college of priests (*collegium*) dedicated to members of the Flavian *gens*, initially founded for the cult of the deified Vespasian (on the model of the *sodales Augustales* for Augustus), with the cult of the deified Titus added soon thereafter following his premature death.

sportula (little basket). Originally a basket containing food given by patrons to their clients, the term also came to be used of the cash handouts that were frequently given instead. The *sportula*, in either form, was typically distributed to clients at the morning **salutatio*, but might also be given at dinner parties (a practice that Domitian forbade for a short period), or on other occasions.

subseciva (remaindered plots). Public lands that had been left unassigned when colonies were first established; these had often come to be occupied by private individuals, which was technically illegal but proved difficult to reverse.

suffect consul. See under “consul”.

tablinum. In an aristocratic Roman house, a study-like room, normally situated on one side of the atrium, which held family records.

Tabularium. The central imperial archive or record office, located at the western end of the *Forum Romanum*.

toga. The toga was a garment for men unique to ancient Rome. It consisted of a long woolen cloth wrapped about the body (normally with a tunic underneath). Only Roman citizens were permitted to wear it, and they typically did so on formal occasions. Variations offered further markers of status: the toga of a member of the senatorial order was adorned with a broad purple stripe (*laticlavus*); equestrians wore togas with a narrow purple stripe (*angusticlavus*); lower classes of Roman citizens wore plain white togas.

tribune. Under the Republic, elected magistrates who protected the common people against abuses by the Senate and its magistrates. Tribunes possessed the power of veto, as well as the right to initiate legislation. Under the Empire, the tribunes themselves became unimportant, but emperors were habitually granted tribunician power (*tribunicia potestas*) without actually holding the office. From Augustus onwards, the formal granting of tribunician power to an individual other than the emperor was the principal means used to indicate the emperor’s intended successor (since naming a successor would overtly contradict the Republican facade maintained during the early Principate).

tribune, military. An officer in the Roman army, usually a young man of equestrian rank. Each legion had six tribunes serving under the legionary commander.

tribunicia potestas. See under “tribune”.

tribunician power. See under “tribune”.

tributum. A general term for various taxes, in money or in kind, exacted by the Roman state, most importantly the *tributum soli* (land tax) and the *tributum capitis* (poll tax). These taxes were

levied in the provinces, not in Italy. Although Italy and non-Italian municipalities with Italian rights were exempted from the *tributum soli*, land in the provinces owned by a Roman citizen was not.

triumph (*triumphus*). The ceremonial entrance into Rome by a victorious Roman general (the *triumphator*) in magnificent procession. The *triumphator* rode in a chariot at the head of his troops, with the spoils and captives of his conquest on display. The procession began on the outskirts of Rome; the route admitted some variation, but it invariably culminated on the **Via Sacra*, leading through the Forum. The triumph was traditionally awarded to celebrate a major military success, usually decisive victory in a foreign war. Though technically bestowed by the senate and theoretically obtainable by any general, during the Principate the triumph became the exclusive preserve of the imperial family; the last non-imperial recipient of this honor was Balbus in 19 BCE.

triumphal honors (*ornamenta triumphalia*). A lesser honor than the *triumph proper, which after the reign of Augustus became the exclusive preserve of the imperial family. Triumphal honors were awarded to victorious generals unrelated to the imperial family: recipients were granted the dress and privileges of the *triumphator*, without the triumphal procession itself.

urban prefect (*praefectus urbi*). Under the Principate, a magistracy not unlike the modern office of mayor, though unique to Rome (with jurisdiction within a radius of 100 Roman miles, or approximately 140 km, so including, for example, the port of Ostia). The urban prefect was responsible for maintaining order in Rome, for which he had command of the *cohortes urbanae* (a rudimentary police force) and the *vigiles* (night watchmen) via his subordinate the *praefectus vigilum*. The office also entailed oversight of Rome's grain supply as well as supervision and maintenance of water supply and the sewage system. Among the urban prefect's other responsibilities was the publication of laws promulgated by the emperor, from which the office gradually acquired a legal jurisdiction.

vectigalia. A broad term encompassing all the regular revenues accruing to the Roman state, including such things as customs duties assessed on the import and export of particular commodities, and proceeds from mines and salt-work.

vehiculatio. The official Roman system of transportation, established by Augustus to ensure the reliability of his couriers, both in Italy and the provinces. The *vehiculatio* (later designated *cursus publicus*) was, in effect, an imperial mail service, and so vital to the centralized management of the empire. It relied on relays of horses (or sometimes mules) stationed at regular intervals on the pertinent roads.

Vestals (*vestales*; sing. *vestalis*). The Vestals, or Vestal Virgins, were priestesses of Vesta, goddess of the hearth. The only priestesses of Roman state religion, they were charged with maintaining a sacred fire, linked to Rome's wellbeing, that had to burn perpetually. The Vestals numbered either four or six and formed one of the four major **collegia* of the Roman state religion.

vexillatio. A detachment of troops, under a standard (*vexillum*) of their own, drawn from a *legion for a specific assignment or purpose.

Via Sacra (Sacred Way). The principal street of Rome, leading from the top of the Capitoline Hill through the **Forum Romanum* to the Flavian Amphitheater. The *Via Sacra* (the name is traditionally derived from the peace concluded there between Romulus and Tatius, and the sacrifices offered to the gods on that occasion) formed the culminating leg of the route followed in a *triumph.

vigintivirate. A set of 20 preliminary administrative posts assigned annually by the emperor. Since this office made one eligible for election to the quaestorship, the vigintivirate was a means, less direct and immediate than *adlection, whereby new members could be inducted into the senate.

virtus. This Latin term has no precise English equivalent. Derived from *vir* (man), its fundamental meaning is "manliness," as speaking to the ideal qualities and conduct of a man. *Virtus* can often

mean courage or prowess in battle (which was for the Romans one of the fundamental aspects of manliness), but it also pertains to the realms of politics and religion, where it may mean “excellence,” “virtue,” “goodness.” In Rome *Virtus* was worshiped as a personified deity, and *virtus* was seen as fundamentally responsible for Roman greatness: it was through that quality that it had conquered an empire.

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